

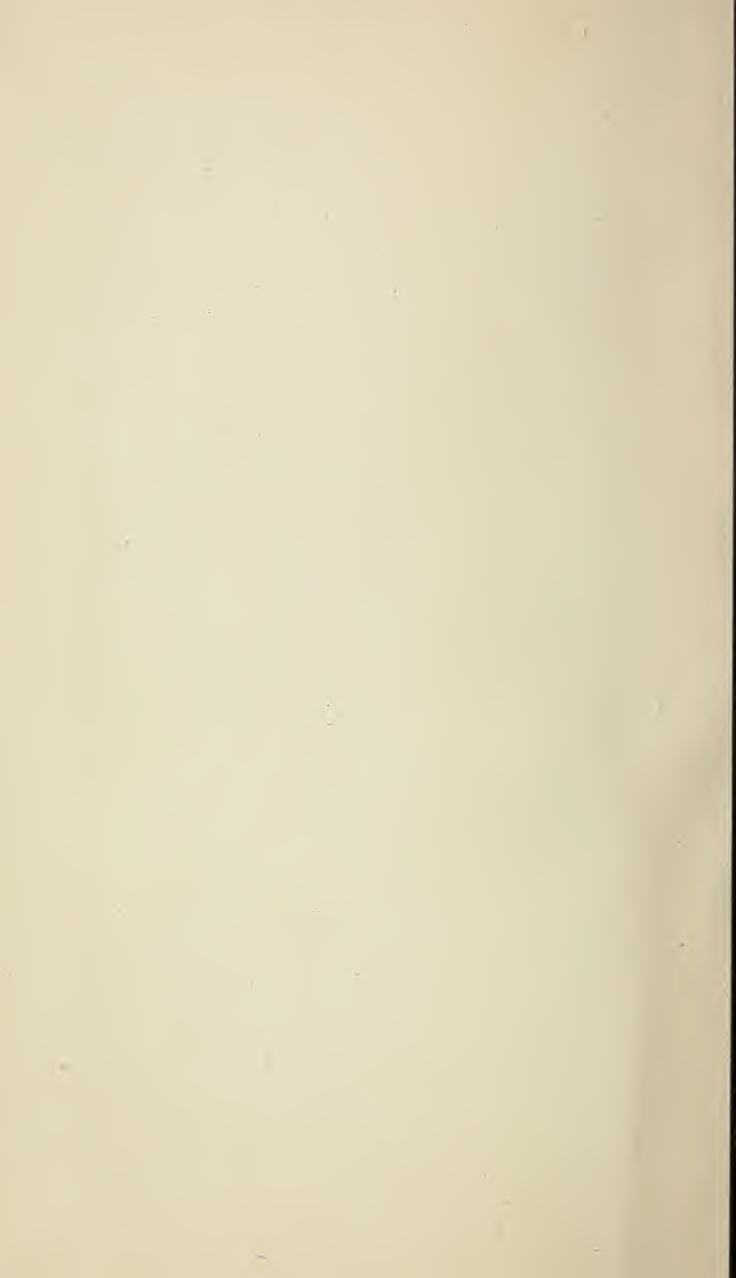


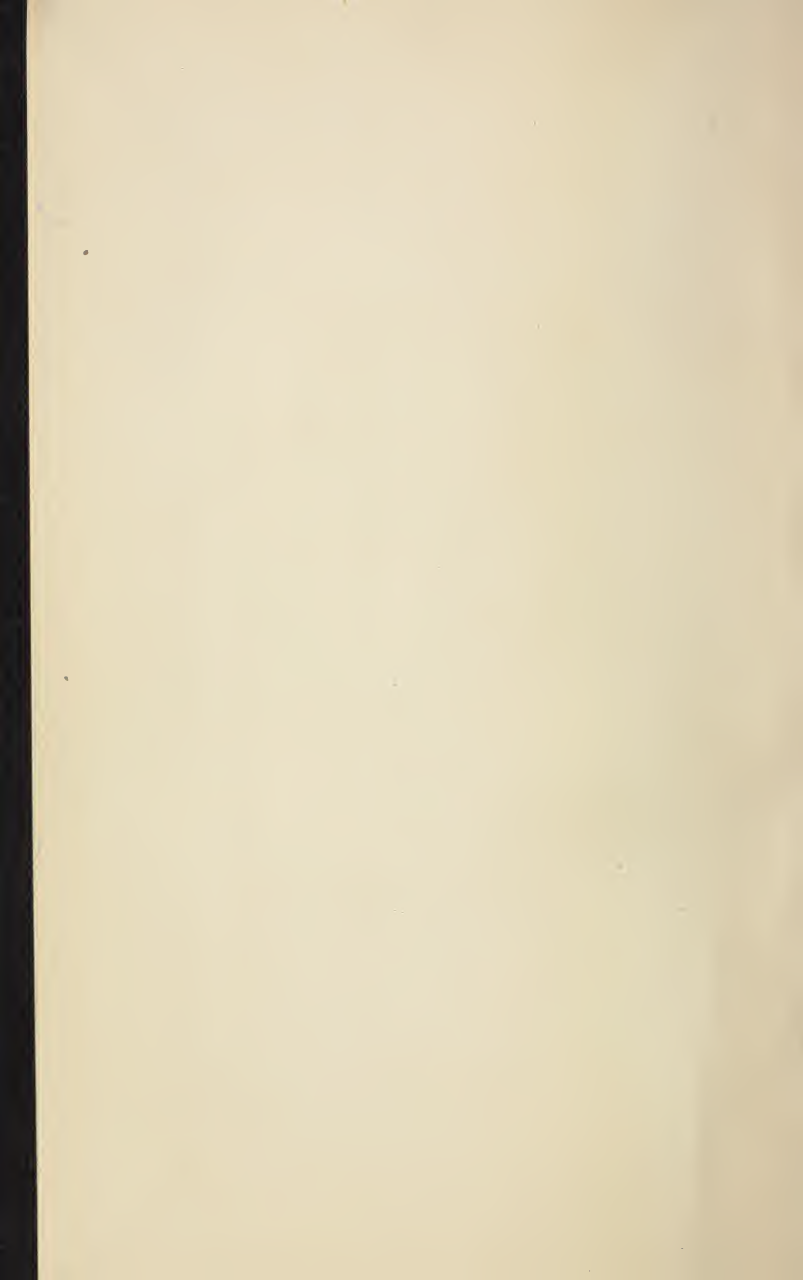
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SIMPLE STUDIES
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"THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF
JESUS CHRIST,
THE SON OF DAVID,
THE SON OF ABRAHAM."

By WILLIAM L. PETTINGILL

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INTRODUCTORY

Much has been said and written on the question as to why we have **four** Gospels instead of one. It is a proper question and one which we should consider carefully and reverently, for the Spirit of God in producing the Scriptures has done nothing at random. And the answer to our question is to be found in the Scriptures.

In the Tabernacle of Moses set up in the wilderness according to the pattern shown to him in the holy mount, and in the Temple which afterwards replaced the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies where God dwelt was separated from the other parts of the structure by a great vail or curtain. This vail always remained closed, barring the way of approach to God's presence, except on the annual Day of Atonement, when the High Priest entered, though not without blood, for his own sins and the sins of the people.

This vail, according to the testimony of Scripture itself, was a type of Jesus Christ in His manifestation as Son of Man and Son of God; the living Word, Who became flesh and dwelt among men. When He was crucified on Calvary, outside the walls of Jerusalem, the vail in the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, thus signifying that by His death the way into God's presence is open to all who come through the Son. Therefore, we are exhorted

to come boldly, being assured of acceptance in the Beloved. Under the Old Covenant it would have been sure death for us to enter the Holy of Holies, but now it is sure death to remain without. It is on this account that the Apostle writes in Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living Way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

All this makes the vail very interesting to us, for it is, in a figure, the person of Christ.

The vail was hung upon **four** pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold. There were **four** sockets of silver for the pillars, and the vail was attached to the pillars by hooks of gold. Upon the vail were embroidered figures of cherubim, and because the vail itself is a type of Christ in the flesh, we assume that the cherubim must have some definite relation to Him. There were also other cherubim with outstretched wings overshadowing the mercy-seat within the Holy of Holies; and it was here, between the cherubim, that God appeared, "in the cloud upon the mercy-seat."

The cherubim appear elsewhere in Scripture, and always in connection with the manifestation of the glory of God. In **Ezekiel** and in **The**

Revelation the cherubim are seen as **four** living creatures. John saw them "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne." The first living creature was like a **lion**, and the second like a **calf** (or **ox**), the third had a face as a **man**, and the fourth was like a **flying eagle**.

We have here doubtless the answer to our question as to the reason for **four** Gospels instead of one, and the key to the true interpretation of the four. For just as the **four** living creatures are typical of our Lord Jesus Christ, showing forth the glory of God, so the **four** Gospels are **four** representations of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He lived and walked among men, showing forth the glory of His Father. In **Matthew** He is seen as the **Lion** of the Tribe of Judah, the King of Israel. In **Mark** He is shown as the devoted **Servant**, toiling patiently according to His Father's will, and at last yielding His life in vicarious sacrifice: the second living creature was like an **ox**. In **Luke** He appears as the **Son of Man**, the Representative of a lost race and bearing its sins; **Luke** is the Gospel of the Manhood of Christ. And **John** describes Him as the **Son of God** Who, "like a flying eagle," came from heaven and returned to heaven—the **Eternal God** incarnate.

We shall expect to find marked differences in the structure and contents of these four books; and yet they have a common testimony, revealing the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, even as the **four**

living creatures rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. 4:8.)

So, then, we have **four** Gospels, and not one. The Holy Spirit of Truth has been pleased to have it so, and it is not for us to cut up His work and then patch it together into "interwoven gospels." Let us take up these books reverently, as we have received them from Him, and seek to know His mind.

Four is the earthly number, as the "four corners of the earth," the **four** winds, the **four** seasons. It is the number of the world as the place of trial. And these four Gospels reveal our Lord Jesus under test, and shown to be the true and faithful Witness, the spotless Lamb, Who needed not to die for His own sins and Who therefore might die for ours.

Again, these **four** Gospels are divided into **three** and **one**, the synoptics forming one group and **John** standing by itself. The first three emphasize particularly the **humanity** of Jesus and the last one His **deity**. The first three, therefore, are represented by earthly creatures, the **lion**, the **ox** and the **man**; while the last is typified by the bird of the heavens. **Three** and **one** are the numbers of **manifestation** and of **supreme Godhead**. Taken altogether these records show unto us **God, manifest in the flesh**.

Matthew is pre-eminently the **Gospel of the Kingdom**. We shall expect to see Jesus, throughout this Gospel, as the **King of Israel**

promised by the Prophets. The book is Jewish throughout, and is incomprehensible unless this point is carefully noted. To understand the book we must remember all the time that Jesus is here presented not primarily as **Saviour**, but as **King**. You will search in vain in **Matthew** for a statement of the Gospel of the Grace of God. **John** will tell you all about that; but **Matthew's** work is to tell you about the Gospel of the **Kingdom of Heaven**. Never elsewhere than in **Matthew** is the phrase, "the Kingdom of Heaven," found anywhere in the Bible. It occurs thirty-two times in **Matthew**. The Church is mentioned, but only by anticipation as a future thing. It is properly found here, however, for **Matthew** is the dispensational Gospel, setting forth the distinction between the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God.

THE KING'S PEDIGREE AND BIRTH

Chapter I

Proceeding now to the study of the first chapter, we are confronted by the **pedigree of the King** (vs. 1-17) and **His birth** (18-25). This is the **book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the Son of Abraham**. Thus He is the Heir to the Davidic and the Abrahamic covenants. The throne is His, and He is the promised Seed through Whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Four **women** are named in **Matthew's** genealogy of Jesus, and all of them are connected in some way with shame. They are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Three of them certainly, and all of them probably, were Gentiles, one was a Canaanitess and one a Moabitess (See Ex. 34: 11; Neh. 13: 1). It is thus shown how truly the Lord Jesus identified Himself with His sinful people, and how grace overleaped all bounds.

It is interesting to notice that **Jehoiachin's** name appears in this list, despite the curse pronounced upon him and his seed in **Jeremiah**. Jehoiachin was the last King in David's direct line to reign in Jerusalem. He reigned but three months, but his brief rule was marked by terri-

ble wickedness. His name appears as Jeconiah in 1 Chron. 3: 16 and Jer. 24: 1, and in Jer. 22: 24-30 he is called Coniah. "As I live, saith Jehovah, though Coniah the son of Jehioakim, King of Judah, were the signet upon My right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; and I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar King of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return. Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed; and are cast into a land which they know not? **O Earth! Earth!! Earth!!!** Hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah: Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah."

Here is the key to the right understanding of the genealogical tables of our Lord Jesus Christ in **Matthew** and **Luke**. According to the Old Testament predictions the Messiah must be the Heir to the throne in the Kingly line, and actually the Seed of David, without being descended from the wicked prince Coniah. It seemed impossible that this could be brought about, but

again the absolute integrity of the Word of God was shown. **Matthew** gives the genealogy of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus. Joseph would have been the rightful King of Israel were it not for the prohibition against the seed of Coniah. **Luke**, on the other hand, gives the ancestry of Jesus through His mother, Heli doubtless being the father-in-law of Joseph. Thus Jesus was at once descended from David through his son Nathan, as shown in **Luke**, and was also the acknowledged Heir of Joseph, who descended from David through Solomon's line, as shown in **Matthew**.

The names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are omitted from this list. They were the descendants of the wicked Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, who sought to wipe out the house of David by killing the seed royal. Her sin is remembered against her to the third and fourth generations and her sons are blotted out of God's remembrance. Then in verse 17 the whole list is divided into groups of fourteen each. It is **seven**, the complete number, multiplied by **two**, the number of testimony; and this repeated **three** times, the number of manifestation.

The King's birth is set forth in verses 18 to 25. Mary, an obscure maiden, of the lineage of Judah and David, living in the village of Nazareth, is chosen of God to be the mother of the Messiah. She was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter, but before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Joseph

thought of quietly divorcing her, for under the Jewish law betrothal was as binding as marriage itself; when an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." This was in fulfillment of Prophecy. The promise was made to Eve in Eden that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The nation of Israel had longed and sighed for the coming of the Deliverer, Who should turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And the inspired record points out that in Isaiah 7:14 it was not the Prophet that spoke, but the words were "**spoken of the Lord** by the Prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us." Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son, and he called His name Jesus.

How simple is the record, and how perfectly clear! Much as men may speculate upon the mystery of the Incarnation, and the mystery is confessedly great, no one can fail to see that the Scriptures plainly declare its miraculous nature. To the anointed eye there is no difficulty,

for God is in the miracle, and nothing is too hard for Him.

The name Jesus, we learn here, is the same as Immanuel. Jehovah-the-Saviour is God-with-us. As Dr. Weston says: "The close of the first chapter indicates the forward step of the Gospels. In the Old Testament God is **for** His people; in the Gospels He is **with** His people; in the Epistles He is **in** His people. These three—God **for** us, God **with** us, God **in** us—are the method and end of divine dealing; holiness **eternal** in the heavens, **incarnate** on the earth, **embodied** in the saints."

THE KING ANNOUNCED AND RE- JECTED

Chapter 2

The Scriptures tell us that "when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4), and that, after He had faithfully performed the will of His Father, "in due time Christ died." (Romans 5:6.) Everything transpired in due time, that is at the right moment, "just in the nick of time." A glance at the state of the world when He came in His First Advent will show how everything was made ready for His coming, and to the anointed eye it will readily appear that everything was prepared and executed "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

The Situation Politically

The year of the Lord Jesus' birth was 750 A. U. C., or 4 B. C., according to the common chronology. Rome was mistress of the world. Her domain extended from the Euphrates on the east and included Egypt and Spain on the south and west and the German provinces on the north. The defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in the battle of Actium, B. C. 31, had produced an Emperor and concentrated and cemented the power of the Empire. God had been at work, though unknown and unrecognized, to prepare the world

politically for the introduction and spread of the truth as it is in Jesus. The great system of highways was created at this time and it became a universal proverb, as it was an established fact, that all roads led to Rome. It was all a part of God's plan.

Socially

Another great evidence of the divine planning may be seen in the social conditions then prevailing. There was a wonderful union and intermingling of the peoples of the world. Rome itself was a great cosmopolitan meeting-place for the nations. The Greek language, though not the language of the state, became, nevertheless, the universal tongue of the people. Ælius Aristides wrote of the Greeks, saying, "They celebrate a far greater triumph than that on the field of Marathon, in the victory of their language. All states and all races of men have yielded to the spread of our tongue and our way of life. It does not stop at the Pillars of Hercules, and neither the Libyan Desert nor the Bosporian Straits, nor the narrow defiles of Syria and Cilicia have set limit to it; but, as if by Divine Providence, an ardent desire for our wisdom and civilization has seized on all the world. Our language is now generally recognized as the common one, and through it the whole earth is become intelligible in the same utterance."

Even this heathen writer recognized the

working of "Divine Providence" in this matter; and surely, we ought not to fail to discern the hand of God in thus reversing for the time being the edict of Babel. The New Testament was written in Greek, and Paul, being a Greek scholar, was able to preach throughout the known world.

Religiously

The world had plenty of religions, such as they were, but this very fact helped to pave the way for the truth, for men were not satisfied, and were seeking something better. Idolatry abounded everywhere and religion was a synonym for that which was impure and degrading. The east worshipped nature. Greece idealized and idolized humanity and therefore had gods with human faults. Their idea of heaven was Mount Olympus, itself a scene of riot and disorder.

Rome worshipped imperialism. On every hand were scepticism and materialism. Philosophers and poets were unanimous in voting all existing religions a failure and were unable to point out the way of relief.

Epicurus could do no better than say "Enjoy thyself." The Sceptics said, "Give up all thought of certain knowledge." The Stoics said, "Abstain and endure! Be sufficient for thyself." Seneca wrote, "Nobody can deliver himself. Someone must stretch out a hand to lift him up."

The acme of human wisdom was expressed

in the advice to commit suicide. "**Patet Exitus**" was the cry. There was a way of escape open—Death! **Pliny** held that man's chief glory was that he could kill himself. **Seneca** united with him in advising suicide. "I am tossed," he said, "upon a sea of pure infirmity. * * * The human mind is by nature perverse and strives after that which is forbidden and perilous.* * * We must say of ourselves that we are evil, and—unhappily I must add—shall be also in the future."

Morally

As a matter of course, the moral condition of the heathen world, growing out of this state of affairs religiously, was beyond description. The philosophers taught good morals, but lived immoral lives. **Juvenal** wrote:

"A ninth age of the world is ours, in wickedness
greater
Than that of iron; and Nature herself for its badness
No name hath as yet found out, and no base metal engendered."

And **Horace** said:

"Our fathers, worse in their time than our grandsires,
Begot us a still more degenerate race;
And soon will a worse brood than we are succeed
us."

"All is full of misdoing and vice," says **Seneca**. "More sin is committed than can be made amends for by punishment. The delight in wickedness becomes greater day by day, and the fear

of it less. Vice no longer conceals itself, but appears unabashed before all eyes. Innocence is not merely rare, but almost non-existent."

And **Livy** adds this word, "Through virtue Rome became great, and now we can neither endure her vices nor their antidote."

Surely this was the time for the Deliverer—this was "the fullness of the time."

The Situation in Jewry

In the Jewish nation affairs were all pointing toward some great crisis. Politically there was the galling Roman bondage, following the Maccabean wars. Religiously, the people were divided into three classes. First there were the **Pharisees**, whose name means "Separated." These were the **formalists** or **ritualists**, punctilious observers of the outward things of the Law, but with little heart for God Himself. The second group called themselves **Sadducees**, meaning "righteous." These were **materialists**, denying the supernatural. In modern times such people are called **moralists**. The third class were the **Essenes**, whose name means "religious." These were the ascetics of that time, corresponding in some degree to the monastic orders of a later period.

The condition among the Jews was one of external misery and inward distress. But everywhere there was a feeling of expectancy, as shown by the literature of the time. The hope of the coming of **Messiah** was burning in many

hearts, and as the distress grew more and more trying the belief increased that the Anointed One was about to come. This hope was abroad among the Gentile peoples also, for there were large numbers of Jews outside of Palestine; and their expectation of a Ruler who should reign over the whole world was communicated in some measure to those about them. There was an expectant gaze toward Palestine. Thus we see that even in the Dispersion itself there was the working out of God's plan to prepare the way for the Advent of His Son.

The Record

The events immediately connected with the birth of Jesus, so fully described by **Luke**, are much more briefly given by **Matthew**. **Luke**, whose Gospel is the Gospel of the Manhood, tells us all about the miraculous conception of the Holy Child, and the marvellous circumstances attending His birth. He is not set forth in **Luke** as a "King of the Jews," but "a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord." The announcement in **Luke** is not to Israel exclusively, but "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." **Luke** tells about the taxing, but **Matthew** says nothing about it; for it is not meet that a King, as such, should be taxed. **Luke**, and not **Matthew**, speaks of the circumcision of the Child and the days of the purification of the mother. All this is foreign to **Matthew's** purpose. **Matthew** is careful to point out that the

royal Child received worship with the gifts of the wise men. **Luke** does not tell us that anyone worshipped Him, though it is through him we learn of the visit of the shepherds, and the joy of Simeon and Anna. The reason is that Jesus is the **King** in **Matthew** and the **Man** in **Luke**. Quite in keeping with this is the reference to Palestine as "the land of Israel," found twice in the second chapter of **Matthew** and nowhere else in the New Testament. It is thus proclaimed as Israel's **land** in the name of Israel's **King**.

The second chapter of **Matthew** contains matter which is all peculiar to this Gospel. No other writer tells of the visit of the magi, the rage of Herod and the massacre of the innocents at Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt and the return therefrom after Herod's death.

These events very evidently did not occur immediately after the birth of Jesus, for **Luke** tells us that after the birth and circumcision of the Holy Child, "when they had performed all things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." From **Matthew** we learn that immediately after the visit of the wise men from the east, "when they had departed," Joseph was warned by an angel to take the Child and His mother and flee into Egypt. "And he arose and took the young Child and His mother by night and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod." It seems, then, that the visit of the wise men and

the flight into Egypt must have been when the Child Jesus was at least a year old. Evidently Joseph and Mary had lived with the Child at Nazareth for twelve months and had now returned to Jerusalem to keep the Feast. **Luke** tells us that the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. Bethlehem being their ancestral city, they would naturally lodge there during the Feast. All the details of the record seem to point to this understanding. The shepherds in **Luke** found the Saviour as "a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." The wise men worshipped Him as a "young Child with Mary His mother." The shepherds had found Him in a stable, lying in a manger; the wise men found Him in a "house." This view of the record also explains why Herod, in seeking the life of the new-born King, destroyed all children in Bethlehem up to two years old.

Our English Bible is responsible for some of the confusion in this connection. The first verse of chapter 2 is made to read, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." The Revised Version does not help us any here, but the American Bible Union translation gives us the correct rendering: "And Jesus **having been born** in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king," etc. Dr. Young translates the same way, and Weymouth reads: "Now **after the birth** of

Jesus, which took place at Bethlehem in Judea in the reign of King Herod, excitement was produced in Jerusalem by the arrival of certain magians from the east," etc.

If the star, seen in the east by the travelers, had first appeared at the time of Jesus' birth, they could not possibly have reached Judea a few days afterward; and in view of all the data we have, it seems certain that their arrival at Jerusalem was at the time of the Passover following that of our Lord's birth by one year.

The star seen by the wise men was not a conjunction of planets, as suggested by Kepler, for it went before them and led them to a certain town and to a certain house. It was a miraculous arrangement by God for the guidance of these seekers. We need not suppose that the star led them all the way from their eastern home. Verse 9 seems to imply that when they left Herod and started for Bethlehem the star reappeared to them, "the star which they saw in the east."

Of course no one knows how many of the wise men there were. Tradition says there were three and that each was a King. This number may have been suggested by the fact that three kinds of gifts were offered—gold, frankincense and myrrh. So far as the record is concerned there might have been scores or hundreds of these men.

The nature of the gifts offered to the infant King was significant. Gold is an emblem of roy-

alty; frankincense speaks of the sweet savour of our Lord's life, ever fragrant with the odor of a sweet smell, as he offered continually an acceptable and well-pleasing sacrifice of obedience to His Father. The myrrh was a resinous substance for embalming the dead and this gift was doubtless ordered of God to prefigure the consummation of that life, when Jesus, through the Eternal Spirit, should offer Himself without spot to God.

Fulfillment of Prophecy

In *Isaiah* 60 there is a prophecy, of which this visit of the wise men is sometimes referred to, as the fulfillment. The 6th verse says, "they shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord." The prophecy is not yet fulfilled, but points to the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. To Israel the Prophet says of that Day, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light and Kings to the brightness of thy rising." It is noticeable that *myrrh* is omitted here, for the death it symbolizes will then be past, and He Who liveth and was dead shall be alive for evermore.

There are four prophecies, however, fulfilled in this second chapter of *Matthew*. The first is from *Mic.* 5:2, indicating Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace. The second is in *Hosea* 11:1, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." The prophecy itself appears to refer to the nation of Israel, and not to the Messiah:

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called My Son out of Egypt.” The Spirit of God implies, through **Matthew**, that the prophetic Word applied to the Messiah, and that when He went down into Egypt it was in order that He might come forth again; and that in that coming forth He was identified with His brethren according to the flesh. Israel was in God’s reckoning included in Jesus, and from His coming forth out of Egypt to His ascent into heaven to sit at His Father’s right hand, He was acting as a Substitute for Israel, and saving His people from their sins.

The **third** prophecy fulfilled is from Jer. 31: 15. The nation is personified in Rachel and is weeping for her children, slain by the sword. Israel has been weeping ever since, and will continue to weep until their mourning shall be for their Brother, Whom they pierced, and they shall know Him and receive Him as the promised Deliverer. Then shall they be glad. It is comforting to read the context in **Jeremiah**: “Thus saith Jehovah: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith Jehovah, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for thy latter end, saith Jehovah; and thy children shall come again to their own border.”

The **fourth** prophecy fulfilled is referred to in the last verse: “He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, He shall be called

a Nazarene." "Nazarene" is the feminine form of "netzar," a rod or shoot. Isaiah uses the word in chapter 11:1: "There shall come forth a Rod (Shoot, R. V.) out of the stock of Jesse, and a Branch out of His roots shall bear fruit." In Jer. 23:5 and 33:15 the Messiah is again spoken of as the Branch, and also in Zech. 6:12. It is a lowly name, as Nazareth was a despised place. Our Lord was often derisively called a Nazarene, and His followers were called "the sect of the Nazarenes." It is a part of the shame which He bore and despised—He made Himself of no reputation.

It is clear that all through the inspired record our Lord Jesus is entirely separated from all about Him as the divine One, amongst those who were human and sinful. Joseph was greatly honored in being called to minister to the holy Child; Mary was greatly honored in being selected to bear the body prepared of God for Him; but when we have said that we have said all. Joseph and Mary do not appear with haloes about their heads, and the Bible knows nothing of "The Holy Family." The wise men did not worship the family, nor even the mother. When they saw the young Child with Mary His mother they fell down and worshipped—not **them**, but—**Him**; and their gifts were presented only unto **Him**. Mariolatry has no place in the Word of God.

It remains only to point out certain typical and dispensational lessons found in our chapter. We

have here a picture of the present Dispensation, drawn by the Spirit of God Himself. The Lord Jesus is still rejected by His own people Israel and He is found and worshipped by the Gentiles. The natural olive branches are broken off and the wild branches grafted in, though this is "contrary to nature." Jesus, to the Jews, is just a Nazarene, despised and rejected; a Man of Sorrows, having no comeliness that they should desire Him, a Root out of dry ground.

But we have here also a picture, no less attractive, of the Dispensation yet to come, when not only wise men from the east, a little remnant of Gentiles, but from the east and from the west and from every quarter and corner of the earth, "the Gentiles shall come to worship the Lord of Hosts at Jerusalem." He will be on His throne then, in Jerusalem. In the meantime we must be content to go outside the camp to find Him, and there we may discover the secret place of the Most High and the shadow of the Almighty. He will be found of them who seek for Him. Bethlehem, for such, is the "House of Bread" indeed, for He is the Bread of God Which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

"Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."

THE KING'S ANOINTING

Chapter 3

The third chapter of **Matthew** describes the coming of the King's forerunner, "the messenger to prepare the way before Me." (Mal. 3:1.) In this Gospel of the Kingdom John Baptist comes preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." **Mark** and **Luke** inform us that he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Again, in the quotation from **Isaiah** 40, **Matthew** writes, "This is He that was spoken of by the Prophet **Esaias**, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." **Matthew** stops there, for that is all of the passage having to do especially with Israel. But **Luke**, who is presenting the Lord Jesus, not as the King of Israel, but as the universal, representative **Man**, proceeds with the quotation: "Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Both **Matthew** and **Luke** report the words of

the Baptist concerning his coming Master, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." This language is befitting the Lord Jesus, both as King of the Jews and as the Son of Man coming to judgment. **Mark** omits it, for in his Gospel our Lord is not the mighty King of Israel, nor the righteous Judge of all, so much as the meek and lowly Servant of God.

Only in **Matthew** do we have the protest of John against baptizing his Lord. **Mark** simply records that "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized of John in the Jordan." That is all that needed to be said of the baptism of the Servant. **Luke** also mentions but briefly the baptism of the Man; but in **Matthew** this Man is the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah**, the glorious Messiah, and John shrinks back. He does not forbid Him, as in the Authorized Version, for he could not forbid the King. Rather, as in the Revised Version, "John would have hindered Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" The King's reply is very significant: "Suffer it now to be, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

Righteousness the Key Word

This word **righteousness** is a key word in **Matthew**, being found seven times in the book.

Mark never once uses the word and though **Luke** has it once and **John** twice, the word has a peculiar meaning in **Matthew** which does not attach to it in the other Gospels. This will readily appear to anyone who will take the trouble to carefully read the passages where the word is found. In **Matthew** righteousness is the Law of the Kingdom of Heaven which is to be set up on the earth. In the present mystery form of the Kingdom, during the King's absence from the earth, there is a mixture of good and evil in the Kingdom, as shown in chapter 13, but when He shall return and establish the Kingdom in manifestation, only the **righteous** shall enter into that Kingdom to reign with Him.

This righteousness is an absolute thing, an inflexible requirement for entrance into that Kingdom. It will not do to present a partial righteousness: indeed, there can be no such thing; if there be any flaw in it, there is no righteousness. It is not enough that we should do more good than evil; if evil be at all present, then righteousness is altogether absent. We must fulfill all righteousness.

"Who, then, can be saved?" This very natural question was once asked of Jesus (Matt. 19:25) and He replied, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Impossible, indeed! For here is a demand for flawless **righteousness**, and when we look within we find dwelling there no good thing. We are all as an unclean thing, and who can bring a

clean thing out of an unclean? All our righteousnesses, when tried by the white light of God's holiness, are as filthy rags. "How, then, can a man be just before God? If He will contend with him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand?* * * If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.* * * How, then, can a man be justified before God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even the moon hath no brightness, and the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less a man, that is a worm! and the son of man, that is a worm! * * * If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Impossible? Yes, with men this is impossible. We need only to get a glimpse of God and His unapproachable brightness to for ever despair of establishing our own righteousness. When we see Him as **Job** saw Him, we abhor ourselves. When we see Him as **Isaiah** saw Him, every man of us covers his face and cries out, "Woe is me! For I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips!" When we see Him as **Daniel** saw Him, we find all our comeliness turning into corruption within us. When we see Him as **Habakkuk** saw Him, our bodies tremble, our lips quiver at His voice and rottenness entereth into our bones. When we see Him as **Saul** of

Tarsus saw Him, all our proud pharisaism goes out and we are prone in the dust crying out, "Lord, what wilt Thou?" When we see Him as **John** saw Him, we can only fall at His feet as dead.

Impossible? Yes, impossible with men; but thanks be to God, with Him all things are possible. It was just because it was impossible with men, that He came to accomplish it for them. And He had us in mind when He used that plural pronoun at His baptism. "Suffer it to be now," said He, "for thus it becometh **us** to fulfill all righteousness." All His people are included in that word. He came not to destroy the Law, nor to set aside its requirements, but to fulfill them; and He kept at His work until He had perfectly accomplished it and could say, "It is finished!" Men could never have done it for themselves and the Law could not do it for them, but "what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, **that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8: 3, 4.)

Death and Resurrection

And would you know how it is done? Read the answer in Jesus' word, "**Thus.**" He presented Himself for baptism and said: "**Thus** it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Bap-

tism is burial and that speaks of **death**. But **death** is the divinely appointed way to life. And baptism is not only burial; it is also **resurrection**. We not only go down into the water, but we also come up out of the water. There is **immersion** not only; there is also **emersion**. And all this signifies that by means of the vicarious death of the Lamb of God in our room and stead, we obtain the righteousness of God and the gift of eternal life. Christ died for the sinner, therefore in God's reckoning the sinner died. And in so dying the sinner has fulfilled all righteousness. He broke the Law, but he paid the penalty, by dying in the person of his Substitute. The Law is perfectly vindicated and its requirements satisfied. The believer is as free as the air. In God's sight he is perfectly righteous—**justified from all things**.

The Doctrine of Baptism

This is the doctrine of baptism—"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4.) The figure is the same, whether in the baptism of the present Dispensation, "into the name of the Lord Jesus," or in John's baptism unto repentance. It is **death** and **burial** and **resurrection**; and **thus** and only **thus** can we fulfill all righteousness. "Him Who knew no sin, He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the

righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) He is our righteousness. (1 Cor. 1:30.)

The baptism of Jesus is recorded by all the synoptists. In **Matthew** He is the King and Shepherd of Israel, leading His people through death to life and glory. In **Mark** He shows that there can be no true service for God which is not preceded by death and resurrection in the power of the Holy Spirit. In **Luke** He in a figure tastes death for all men. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. In **Luke** He is indeed the Saviour of the world. **John's** Gospel does not record the baptism, for Jesus in that Gospel is the Eternal Word, God manifest in the flesh, and it is not in keeping with **John's** purpose to speak in that place of His humiliation. **John's** aim throughout is to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that, believing we might have life through His name.

The strong language addressed by John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees is full of meaning. These were the ritualists and moralists. "Offspring of vipers," John called them, thus tracing them back to their father, that old serpent the devil. These men prided themselves on their Arahamic origin, but John warned them that something more was demanded. It was not a question now of descent from Abraham, but there must be repentance and fruit. He was seeking to show them their sad plight and helpless condition, in order that the great

Saviour might reach them. John was indeed preparing the way for his Lord, and **Luke** tells us afterward (ch. 7:29, 30) that those who heard Jesus and justified God were those who had been baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

John's baptism was a national one, having to do specifically with Israel. It was unto repentance, which means a change of mind. Israel had come to the end of itself as a nation and as Moses had led them through the Red Sea and Joshua had led them through Jordan, so now the Lord Jesus, the Joshua of the New Covenant, would lead them in a figure through the Jordan again.

John spoke of his baptism as merely preliminary. "I, indeed," he said, "baptize you with water unto repentance: * * * He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." When the great Day of Pentecost was fully come the baptism of the Holy Ghost was given, and there were tongues "like as of fire;" but that was not the baptism with fire. The Jewish nation has yet to pass through that baptism in connection with the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, that Day that shall burn as an oven. Then shall He sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, purging out dross in the fires of judgment.

Let us thank God that Jesus' death was not in vain. When He died on the Cross of Cal-

vary the vail of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, thus opening the way into the Holy of Holies. So at His baptism, which was a type of His death, the heavens themselves were opened, the Spirit came upon Him and abode on Him; and the Father Himself spoke out of the clouds: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Three times during His ministry did His Father thus witness for Him. The Father was well pleased with the Son in all that He did, for He always did those things that were well pleasing in His sight. His suffering for us was acceptable and well pleasing to God and we who have come to God by Him are accepted in the Beloved. And all this is true because He for us has fulfilled all righteousness.

"Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before;
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There they spent their utmost power.

"First-fruits of the resurrection,
He is risen from the tomb;
Now we stand in new creation,
Free, because beyond our doom.

"Jesus died, and we died with Him,
Buried in His grave we lay,
One with Him in resurrection
Now in Him in heaven's bright day."

THE KING'S ADVERSARY

Chapter 4

Matthew is the **Genesis** of the New Testament, and there are many points of correspondence between it and the Genesis of the Old Testament. One of these is the appearance, early in the story, of the person called **Satan**. At the dawn of human history, this terrible being appeared in the garden of Eden to tempt the first Adam; and now he presents himself in the wilderness of Judea to tempt the Second Adam. It is of great importance that we should know who Satan is, and the Scriptures have not left us in the dark concerning him. It is quite the fashion nowadays to dispose of Satan as a bugaboo of the Dark Ages and to make him the butt of joke and ridicule. And this is doubtless quite in keeping with his own plans, as the enemy of God and man; for if we can be deluded into thinking of him only as something unreal or unworthy of serious thought, it will leave us unarmed against his snares.

To the Law and the Testimony! Let the Word of the living God enlighten us.

The student who bows to the authority of the Scriptures can have no doubt as to the **reality** and **personality** of Satan. **Satan is a person.**

There is not a single impersonal reference to him in the whole Bible. Personal names, personal pronouns, personal acts, personal planning and plotting, personal reasoning and scheming are all attributed to him, showing him to be an actual person, as truly as God is a person, as truly as men are persons. Satan is not merely an **evil influence** or an **evil principle**. He is altogether evil, and the Scriptures unmistakably declare it, but he is always set forth, not as an influence, but as a **person**.

Look at the chapter we are considering here, the fourth of **Matthew**. In this story the personal **devil** is seen as really as the personal **Messiah**. Both of these are persons, one as actually as the other, and neither more so than the other.

Satan is not only a person. He is a person of great **dignity**. (See Jude 8, 9.) Originally created perfect, he fell from his high estate through pride. Doubtless he is the spiritual King of Tyre described in Ezekiel's Prophecy. (Compare Ezek. 28: 11-17 with John 8: 44 and 1 Tim. 3: 6.) Unlike the fallen angels of Jude 6, he is not under restraint, but "as a roaring lion, **walketh about**, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5: 8.)

Satan is **not in hell**. Though that awful place is especially for him and his angels (Matt. 25: 41), and he will certainly be cast at last into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20: 10), his residence during the present Age is chiefly in the **heavenly realms**,

where he has access to God's presence and accuses the saints before Him day and night. (See Job 1:6-12; Rev. 12:10.) His ejection from heaven, described in Rev. 12:9, is yet future. The Lord Jesus spoke of the same event prophetically in Luke 10:18, and John 12:31. When Satan finally reaches hell it will not be to reign as King, but to suffer **eternal torment**. There will be no King in hell: it will be a place of anarchy, well suited to those who "despise dominion" and will not have God's King to reign over them. (Jude 8; Luke 19:14.)

In the meantime, however, **Satan is a King**. The Scriptures speak of him as **The Prince of this World**, **The God of this Age**, and **The Prince of the Power of the Air**, and it is declared that the whole world lieth in the evil one. (John 12:31; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1, 2; 1 John 5:19.) The Lord Jesus speaks of Satan's Kingdom in Matt. 12:26. The agents employed by Satan in his Kingdom includes angels, principalities and powers—demons in the spiritual world—and upon the earth he has followers, who are called in the Bible "**children of the devil**" and "**his ministers**," these latter being disguised as "**ministers of righteousness**." The devil himself appears as "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (See Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:12; John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 2:2.)

In the realm of spirits Satan appoints certain of his agents to rule in his interest in the affairs

of the nations of this world. We read in **Daniel** of such agents of Satan, as the Prince of Persia, and the Prince of Greece. (Read carefully Dan. 10: 13, 20, 21.)

In the earth Satan is given great power over men, even including the power of death. (Heb. 2: 14.) He gathers nations to battle (Rev. 16: 13, 14); carries men into sin (1 Cor. 12: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 26); hides the Gospel from the lost (2 Cor. 4: 3, 4); hinders Christians in their service (1 Thess. 2: 18); and accuses them day and night in heaven before God (Rev. 12: 10).

Satan often visits the earth in person and sometimes appears visibly to men. In Eden he presented himself as the serpent. We are not to suppose that he looked like the slimy crawling snakes of to-day, for the curse had not yet been pronounced. He appeared as a beautiful and attractive **person** as he tempted the man and woman in the garden. Sometimes he enters into the bodies of men who yield themselves to him, and operates through them, as in the case of Judas. (John 13: 26, 27.) Again, he fashions himself into an angel of light and his ministers fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, "whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11: 13-15.) The record does not tell us how he appeared to our Lord Jesus in the wilderness, but he may rest assured that the modern conception of him as a black hideous monster with horns and hoofs and forked tail is far from the truth, and indeed it may be

believed that that idea itself originated with himself, for he is a liar and the father of lies, whose particular business it is to deceive the whole world.

As to **Satan's destiny**, the Word of God is perfectly clear. He will be **cast out** of the heavens (Rev. 12:9-11); he will **raise up** and **energize** the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3-9; Rev. 13:2, 3); he will **gather the world** under Antichrist to fight against Christ and His saints at Jerusalem (Rev. 19:19, 20; Zech. 14:3, 4); he will be **bound for a thousand years** at our Lord's return to the earth as King (Rev. 20:2, 3); he will be **loosed again** for a season at the close of the Millenium and **gather the hosts of evil** to fight against the Lord (Rev. 20:7-9), and he will be finally **cast into the Lake of Fire**. (Rev. 20:10.)

The Temptation of Jesus followed immediately His baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit. In **Matthew's** account the **King** is led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil. So also in **Luke**, for Jesus was thus tested as the **Man** as well as the **King**. **Mark** has two verses on the temptation of the **Servant**, but his utter subjection as the **Servant** is emphasized by Mark's words "Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness." This is submission, and every servant may find in just such surrender to the Spirit of God the surest refuge from the devil's hindering power. This thought was given to Peter when he wrote (1 Pet. 5:5-11): "God

resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you. Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you. To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (See also James 4: 5-10.)

The temptation followed a period of **forty days**. **Forty** is the number of testing. These **forty** days correspond with the **forty** years of Israel's testing in the wilderness and Moses' **forty** years at the back side of the desert.

The Threefold Temptation

The temptation was threefold, and though far greater in power and degree than that presented to man in Eden, is yet similar to it in principle. The appeal of the adversary was directed to the **lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the vainglory of life**. This is all that is in the world (1 John 2:16) and it is therefore all that the devil has to offer. This threefold appeal prevailed with Eve in the garden.

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be desired to **make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” (Gen. 3:6.)

First, there was **the lust of the flesh**. It was good for food. Now Adam and Eve were not hungry; there was abundant provision of food and there was no need for the fruit of the forbidden tree. Jesus had not eaten food for forty days, and He was surrounded, not by the riches of the garden of Eden, blooming under the blessing of God, but rather by the bleak and dreary desert of Judea, blighted by the curse. How subtle, then, was the temptation! It began with an attempt to cast a doubt upon God’s word. In Eden Satan began with the merest suggestion. “Yea, **hath** God said?” and followed with a flat contradiction, “Ye shall **not** surely die.” In his meeting with Jesus he began the same way—“**If** thou be the Son of God.” God had said it at the Jordan, “This is My beloved Son.” Satan’s suggestion is that if Jesus were God’s Son, He would not be suffering. It is the beginning of lies and the sum of them. Adam and Eve were led to believe that God did not love them, or He would not have forbidden anything to them. Satan sought to convince Jesus that God would never let His Son go hungry. Every day and all the time this evil suggestion is thrust into the minds of the children of God—

"If ye be the sons of God, then there ought to be something in it for you."

Jesus was perfectly able to make bread out of stones, or out of nothing, for He had made the stones and all things besides. Satan knew this, for he knew Who He was dealing with. It was no sin to be hungry, and the temptation to prove His divine sonship before the very eyes of the enemy would be very great.

This was the devil's reasoning, but his shafts recoiled upon himself, for he was met by the Sword of the Spirit. "It is written," flashed the reply, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jesus was hungry and He would eat presently, if God so willed it. He could perform a miracle and set a table for Himself in the desert, but it was not for Him to do so at the word of the enemy before Him. He had come to destroy the works of the devil, not to be a partner in his evil deeds. He had broken into the house and was bound to take away the treasure, but He must first bind the strong man, and that He was now doing. (Matt. 12:29.)

Matthew and **Luke** give the second and third appeals in reverse order. Of course there is a reason for this difference, and this reason is to be sought in connection with the particular design of each account. In **Luke's** Gospel of the Manhood, the temptations are given in the same order as those of **Genesis**, thus bringing into sharp contrast by parallelism the temptation of

the first man, who was of the earth, earthy, and the Second Man, Who was the Lord from heaven. In **Matthew** the Kingdom is ever in the forefront and the three phases of the temptation are given in the order that would most strongly appeal to the King, the climax being reached in the last appeal, by which the adversary offered a short cut to the throne.

The second appeal in **Matthew** is the third in **Luke**, and was especially directed against the **vainglory of life**. Jesus is taken into the holy city, Jerusalem, and set on the pinnacle of the Temple. Then the devil tries his own hand at wielding the Sword of the Spirit. "If thou art the Son of God," said he, "cast thyself down: for **it is written**, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The enemy has discovered that Jesus cannot be tempted from the Word of God, he will now see whether He can be tempted by it. He perverts the Scripture and makes it seem to say what God never intended. There is very much such wresting of the Word of God in our day. The devil's quotation was from the ninety-first Psalm, and well he knew, what is often denied by teachers to-day, that this Psalm was Messianic. But in using it he tore a passage from its context and left out an important clause in the very midst of the passage quoted. The full thought of the Psalm is that, **because** of the Messiah's

perfect obedience and faithfulness, **therefore** He shall be protected. In the ninth verse the Son, addressing the Father, says, "Thou, O Jehovah, art My refuge." And the Father replies, "Thou hast made the Most High Thy habitation; there shall no evil befall Thee, neither shall any plague come nigh Thy tent. For He will give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways. They shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." This was the subtle temptation to the **vainglory of life**. Eve saw that the tree was to be desired **to make one wise**. It is ever a dangerous tendency among men to seek to obtain wisdom apart from God—to be wise above what is written; in other words, to suppose that they know more than God; and better than God, what is good for them. And if there can be found a seeming warrant for such presumption in the Word of God, so much the better, and so much stronger is the temptation to run ahead of God.

It is a great thing to have many shafts to our bow and be able with Jesus to meet the enemy at this point with **"It is written again."** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, O man of God, for you shall find much need for it in meeting the snares and wiles of the devil. **"It is written again"** must go with **"It is written,"** for the enemy of our souls will never be content to leave us after but one thrust and parry.

"Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." This is full of meaning for every child

of God. He would have us know that He is our Father, to be **depended upon**, not to be provoked; to be **trusted** and not to be put constantly to the proof. A desire thus to continually test Him and presume upon His faithfulness is ever born of the sin of unbelief, the sin that doth so easily beset us. It is always suspicious that He is not wholly true and that He must be always watched, lest He fail to fulfill His promises. It is hateful to God and also hateful to His well beloved Son, Who well knows that **"God is faithful."**

The third temptation in **Matthew** and the second in **Luke** is an appeal directed to the **lust of the eye**. Eve yielded when she saw that the tree of knowledge was **a delight to the eyes**. This was no reason for eating from it, for surely that would not add to the beauty of the tree. The temptation offered to Jesus, however, was reasonable and powerful. From the top of an exceeding high mountain he sees, as a panorama spread out beneath Him, all the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Satan does not risk the use of the Spirit's sword again, for it cut his own hand when he tried it. But in desperation he unmasks himself and flatly proposes that the Son of God shall fall down and worship him. "All these things will I give thee." There is no longer a doubt introduced as to this Man being God's Son. The proposition is without any such suggestion. The subtle **If** is omitted. It was a plain bargain: Worship Satan, and Jesus

should at once become the **King of the Whole Earth.**

This is the gist of the matter and this is the devil's last ditch. He can go no further. The Lord Jesus speaks one word of command: "Get thee hence, Satan," and then thrusts at him again with the sharp two-edged sword—"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

It is not surprising that then the devil left Him; and it is beautiful to read that the angels came and ministered to Him. They had hovered about eager to serve the Lord, but they must not interfere and rob Him of the glory of the victory. Now that the battle is won, however, they may perform their labor of love. It reminds one of Abram's experience when just after refusing to take so much as a thread or a shoe-latchet from the King of Sodom, lest he should say, "I have made Abram rich"—"after these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy **shield**, and thy exceeding great **reward.**" (Gen. 15:1.) It often transpires that, only after we have resisted the offers of the enemy, do we learn that our sufficiency is of God.

It is worthy of note that Jesus chose all His answers for the tempter from the book of **Deuteronomy**. No wonder the devil hates **Deuteronomy**, and has brought about it such a storm of destructive criticism in these last days. He has felt the keen edge of the sword in this par-

ticular part of it, and he would like to be rid of it if he could. But the old book still stands, and it will stand, for it is the Word of God.

The question is often raised as to whether there was any possibility of Jesus falling before the tempter's power. I answer, **No**. He was God in the flesh, and God cannot be tempted with evil. He was ever holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. If someone objects that in that case there was no temptation, I answer that though there was no desire on Jesus' part to yield to the devil's allurings, yet there was real temptation, in the sense of **testing**, and this is the meaning of Hebrews 4:15, which being literally translated reads: "For we have not a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our infirmities, but Who has in all points been tempted like as we are, **apart from sin.**" That is, He did not have the inward craving for evil things, as you and I have, for that would be indwelling sin, and there was no sin in Him. He is nevertheless quite able to sympathize with us, for He made us and knows us altogether.

If Jesus had failed under the test, His failure would have proved, not that God could sin. but that Jesus was not God. For in this sense, "**God cannot be tempted with evil.**" (Jas. 1:13.)

The King's Journeyings

The remainder of our chapter deals with the Galilean ministry of Jesus. The Judean ministry is omitted by Matthew though described

by **John**, for in that ministry Jesus was not preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Jewish leaders having already rejected it in rejecting its herald and forerunner, John the Baptist. Jesus, before going into Galilee, spent the greater part of a year in Judea, teaching to individuals the doctrine of personal salvation by grace through faith. The record is found in the first four chapters of **John** and omitted by the synoptists. The reason is clear. The salvation preached by Jesus was salvation through His own death and resurrection. **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke** have not to do primarily with the **dead and risen Christ**, but rather with the **Man Jesus** according to the flesh; **Matthew** drops the story after the temptation and never resumes it until Jesus is up in Galilee nearly a year later and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, saying "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." **Luke**, in his Gospel of the Manhood, naturally tells us all about Jesus' visit to Nazareth, "where He had been brought up." **Matthew** barely mentions it (v. 13) and proceeds to point out that Jesus' going to dwell at Capernaum was in fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy. Galilee though a part of Palestine, was called "Galilee of the Gentiles," because the people there had become so apostate from God and had intermarried and intermingled with the Gentile peoples. It is as if the Prophet had said "**Heathenish Galilee!**"

The call of Simon and Andrew and James and John recorded in this chapter, was not at the

time of their first meeting with Jesus. The Gospel of **John** tells us all about that. But this was a definite call to service. They were ready, for they straightway left their nets, their boats, their father, and their all, and followed Him. There is a great lesson here. These men had called Jesus **Master** and **Lord**, and therefore when He said "Follow me!" they were bound to do so. The Lordship of Jesus means this if it means anything. Nothing must be allowed to stand between Him and us, if He be our Lord. Father, mother, husband, wife, boats, nets, fish, property—everything must be subject to Him, for He is Lord. It was not an idle question Jesus asked when He said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not that which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) To **obey** is better than sacrifice.

The last paragraph of the chapter is just a little picture of the Millennial glory. Bodily healing is always a feature of the Kingdom and goes along with the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. When Jesus comes back to earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, all sickness and disease shall disappear. He will then be acknowledged as Lord of all and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. In that Day we shall say:

"'Tis come—the glad millennial morn—

The Son of David reigns,

Sing, sing, O Earth! For thou art free,

And Satan is in chains.

"Rejoice, for thou shalt fear no more
The ruthless tyrant's rod;
Nor lose again the gracious smile
Of thine incarnate God.

"But chiefly Thou, O Solyma!
Thou Queen of Cities, sing!
With shouts of triumph welcome now
Thy Morning Star, thy King.

"O blessed Lord, we little dreamed
Of such a morn as this:
Such rivers of unmingled joy—
Such full, unbounded bliss!

"And O how sweet the happy thought
That all we taste and see,
We owe it to the dying Lamb,
We owe it, Lord, to Thee."

THE LAWS OF THE KINGDOM

Chapter 5

The **Sermon on the Mount** is one of the most misunderstood passages in all Scripture. Much confusion has resulted here from a failure to "rightly divide the Word of Truth," a principle of Bible interpretation all but forgotten in our day (2 Tim. 2:15). On account of this failure to follow God's own plan of Bible study much of the current comment in connection with this great discourse of the Lord is misleading.

For example, there is that cry heard everywhere to-day—"Back to Christ!" What does it mean? Why, it is a deliberate proposition to substitute the **Sermon on the Mount** for the **preaching of the Cross**, as a means of salvation. "Never mind Paul," they say. "Paul was only a disciple after all, and Christ was Paul's Master. Never mind Paul, then. Back to Christ! Back to Christ!" And there are preachers, too—whose exalted position amongst the Churches would suggest that they were ministers of the Gospel—preachers, wearing the livery of Heaven—are saying, "The Sermon on the Mount is a big enough Bible for us." And they are preaching the **ethics** of Jesus instead of the **blood** of Jesus as the way of life. To the lost they say,

in effect, "Study the Sermon on the Mount and thou shalt be saved. Live according to its precepts and heaven will be gained at last. Be poor in spirit, and thine is the Kingdom of Heaven. Mourn, and thou shalt be comforted. Be meek, and thou shalt inherit the earth."

What cruel mockery is this! Surely, the blind are leading the blind and both leaders and followers are heading for the same ditch. As if a man, who is by nature a child of wrath, could thus make himself pleasing to God! Who is there in all the world that by his own volition can be poor in spirit, or mournful, or meek, or hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Can a man be meek by **trying** to be meek? Or can a man by his own effort make himself merciful, or pure in heart? And what is the use of telling a lost sinner—who himself is full of enmity toward God—what is the use of talking to that man about the blessedness of making peace, and that the peacemakers shall be called the sons of God. If this be the condition of sonship and salvation, he may as well give it up first as last, for he is helpless, and hopeless, and blind, and dead in his trespasses and sins. Peace? "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." * * * "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Indeed, it is more than cruel mockery: it is wicked **blasphemy**. For what, after all, is the cause of this sudden stampede from Paul to Christ? It is nothing else than a determined effort to get rid of the **Cross**. It is **Unitarianism**

gone to seed. The bloody Gospel is an offense to your modern refined Pharisee. It is the old, old subterfuge—"Let him come down from the Cross, and we will believe him. Jesus is all right; he was a good man, and we will gladly receive him—**anywhere except on the Cross.**" I say again it is blasphemous. It makes the Cross of Christ of none effect and His death a needless sacrifice.

But men cannot rid themselves of the Cross by appealing to Christ. It was **Christ**, and not Paul, Who declared that the Son of Man **MUST** be lifted up. It was **Christ**, and not Paul, Who told a high-toned Pharisee that he **MUST** be born again. It was **Christ**, and not Paul, Who taught that the grain of wheat **MUST** fall into the ground and die. There is no controversy between Christ and Paul. To Paul was grace given to proclaim the doctrine of the Church, and through him the risen Lord continued to do and teach, as He Himself had begun while still in the world. (Ac. 1:1.) Paul was nothing at all in himself: he was proud to own that he was the bonds slave of Jesus Christ. But Paul was also an Apostle of Jesus Christ and **the doctrine of Paul is the doctrine of Jesus Christ.**

The Sermon on the Mount, then, is not the way of salvation for the sinner. Neither is it the rule of life for the Christian. The Lord Jesus had not yet established the Church of God when He preached the Sermon on the Mount. He is now Head over all things to the

Church which is His body, and He has not neglected to give to His Church ample directions for her guidance, but these directions are not to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is pure law, and the Christian is not under law, but under grace. The Christian though he may have been formerly a Jew and thus under the Law, is now dead to the Law by the body of Christ and married to another: even to Him Who is raised from the dead. Christ hath redeemed him from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for him.

If, then, the Sermon on the Mount be neither the way of life for the sinner, nor the rule of life for the believer, what is it? The answer is that the Sermon on the Mount is the code of laws of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Kingdom, though for the time being rejected and held in abeyance, will one day be set up on this earth. Its capital will be at Jerusalem and the Law shall go forth from Mount Zion. At that time, "Jehovah shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall Jehovah be one and His name one." (Ps. 2:6; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 14:9.)

In the Sermon on the Mount we have this King, Jehovah-Jesus, formally offering the Kingdom to Israel in His own person. This offer is made in Galilee, for it had been offered through John the Baptist in Judea and rejected. The Anointed King in this great discourse plainly sets forth the nature of the proposed Kingdom and the laws by which He will govern the earth when

He re-establishes and occupies the throne of David.

Far be it from me to say that this Sermon of Jesus is of no value to the Church of God. It is of great value. It is part of the Scriptures, and all Scripture is profitable. There is much in common between the **Church** and the **Kingdom**, though they are far from identical.

We who are now members of His body, the **Church**, are destined to reign with Christ over the **Kingdom**; therefore, we ought to have lively interest in the Laws of the Kingdom. Besides this, we shall find many eternal principles expressed in the Sermon, which are always operative. It is true even now that the poor in spirit are the truly "blessed," or "happy," as the word means. It is true even now that those that mourn, in the fellowship of His sufferings, shall be comforted. It is true always that the merciful shall obtain mercy and that the pure in heart do see God.

The Sermon on the Mount is found only in **Matthew**. **Luke** gives a Sermon on the Plain, corresponding somewhat in substance, but it was evidently preached at a different time and place. It is fitting that the Laws of the Kingdom should be recorded in the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The Seven Beatitudes

The King's proclamation took place in the presence of great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from

beyond the Jordan (ch. 4: 25) though it was addressed directly to His own disciples, heirs of the Kingdom, whom He called apart unto Himself and apart from the crowd. (ch. 5: 1.) He began by describing in seven beatitudes the heirs of the Kingdom as to their character. Mark you, He is describing persons, not as they *ought* to be, nor as they ought to *try* to be, but as they *are*. They are His workmanship; by the grace of God they are what they are. They have not become what they are by their own striving but by His great favor and power—it is God working in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Phil. 2: 13.)

First—**“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”** They discovered their utter poverty, and, taking the place of paupers before God, they suddenly became rich. Having nothing and deserving nothing in themselves, all things became theirs. All this was because of the grace of their Lord Jesus Christ, Who, though He was rich, yet for their sakes He became poor, that they, through His poverty, might be rich. (2 Cor. 8: 9.)

Second—**“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”** Having come to know the Lord Jesus, they became, like Him, men of sorrows and acquainted with grief. This is their high privilege, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer with Him. This is fellowship with His suffering. It is just sympathy with Him, seeing things as He sees them and

feeling with Him as He yearns over this lost world. They shall be comforted when He is comforted. When He sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied, then shall they, too, be satisfied, awakening with His likeness.

Third—"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." The Spirit of the Master is upon them and He is meek and lowly in heart. Meekness is never a human product; it is ever the fruit of the Spirit. It speaks of surrender to God, knowing His way is best. They shall inherit the earth, for it belongs to Christ and Christ belongs to them and they to Him. Children of God are they, and heirs, jointly with Christ.

Fourth—"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." No unsaved sinner ever hungered or thirsted after righteousness. He may desire mercy, but he knows that if righteousness were meted out to him it would mean death.

"No thief e'er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the Law,"

and it is natural that the sinner under sentence of death should desire anything but righteousness. But it is different with the heir of the Kingdom. He has met the claims of the Law, having died unto it in the person of his Substitute, and now his whole soul yearns within him for righteousness. The will of God, once terrible to him, has become his meat and drink. And he shall be

filled! Blessed be God for that promise! He shall be filled and lack nothing, having righteousness and nothing but righteousness within him. Sin all gone, and he is filled with righteousness! Not yet is this true for us, my fellow-Christians, for though we are, in our standing before Him, free from sin, yet the fight with the flesh is not over; but in that day we shall be filled with un-mixed righteousness. Blessed, indeed, is this! **They shall be filled.**

Fifth—"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." This is the first beatitude of the last section, for like all the **sevens** in **Matthew**, this seven is divided into a **four** and a **three**. The first four, this being the earth number, describe the earthly condition of the heirs while waiting for the Kingdom to appear. The final three, this being the heavenly number, speak of the heirs exercising their official functions, in the Kingdom. First, then, they are merciful, for they have become partakers of the divine nature. And the mercy that they themselves received is not earned or attained by their own mercy toward others: rather it is **obtained** or **found**, as a gift.

Sixth—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The purity here is not merely cleanness of heart, but rather **singleness** of heart. The heart is fixed; it is fully occupied with God. They shall see God. Their communion with Him shall be uninterrupted, for they have free access by His grace.

Seventh—"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." This is ever the highest, holiest work of the heirs of the Kingdom. It is their joyous privilege to make peace between God and men. Christ has made peace through His Cross, and God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, but He has committed unto His disciples the ministry of reconciliation. And sonship can manifest itself in no surer way than this: God's sons holding forth the Word of Life, that men may have peace with God; and where there is peace between man and God, there will also be peace between man and man.

This, then, as Dr. Weston puts it, is the seven-runged ladder by which the poor beggar mounts upward. "Destitute, sorrowing, meek, hungry, he is forgiven, a trusted official, a son. **Grace** stands at the foot of the ladder, **mercy** in the middle, **peace** at the head; so the benediction of the beloved disciple sums up these beatitudes: '**Grace, mercy and peace** from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love be with you.'"

The Blessedness of the Heirs

The seven beatitudes, showing the character of the heirs, are followed by two others, showing the real blessedness of their position in the world. If they are true heirs of the Kingdom, the world will hate them and persecute them. This is a cause of rejoicing for them, for great

is their reward in heaven. The heirs of the Kingdom are the salt of the earth, to arrest the process of corruption. The salt must be genuine or it is worthless. They are the light of the world, to light up the way to peace and safety. The light must be allowed to shine, for the glory of the Heavenly Father.

“Every Jot and Tittle”

As to the Law and the Prophets—that is, the Old Testament Scriptures—the King decrees that they are not to be set aside; **every jot and tittle** shall be accomplished. “Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Vs. 19, 20.)

These words have been used in a way that our Lord never intended, in order to place Christians in this Dispensation under the yoke of the Mosaic Law. As a matter of fact, every Christian, so far as the Law is concerned, is a dead and buried sinner. He has died to the Law, and it has no more dominion over him. He is now free from the Law, because he died to satisfy its claims. In the person of his Substitute he fulfilled the

demands of the Law. The Law can never be fulfilled in any other way by any man. The Law demands that the sinner shall die, and unless you have died you have not fulfilled the Law. If, on the other hand, you died to the Law by the body of Christ, you have fully satisfied the Law and it can smite you no further. To be sure, you have also risen from the dead, but the Law had nothing to do with your resurrection—it took grace to do that: and in the eyes of the Law you are a dead man.

"Free from the Law, O happy condition!
Jesus hath bled and there is remission,
Cursed by the Law, and bruised by the Fall.
Grace hath redeemed us, once for all."

"Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** wherewith Christ hath made you **free**, and be not entangled again in the yoke of **bondage**." For verily, this righteousness, which the Gospel hath brought unto us, greatly exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Law of the Kingdom of Heaven is much higher and deeper than the Law of Sinai. Moes said, "Thou shalt not kill." Jesus, looking upon the heart, said, "Thou shalt not hate." He also taught that religious ceremonies could never make up for sin of the heart. (Vs. 21-26.)

Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus said, "Thou shalt not sin in thy heart." The thing to be avoided was not merely the outbreaking of evil, the **outward result** of

indwelling sin, but the horrid thing itself. Men are often greatly distressed about their trespasses and forget that the real trouble is within. Sin must be overcome at any cost, even though it may mean the sacrifice of an eye or an hand. As for divorce, it may be resorted to for one single cause, but there is no warrant here for remarriage. Again, Moses said, "Thou shalt not swear falsely." Jesus said, "Swear not at all. * * * * Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay nay," and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." (Vs. 33-37.) "Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:5.)

The Law of the Kingdom of Israel, under the Old Covenant, said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In the Kingdom of Heaven, the Law will be, "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man would go to law with thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." (Vs. 38-42.) This, as has already been said, is Kingdom teaching primarily; yet, the principle is the same always. We are even now to act in love and to overcome evil with good.

It had been said aforetime, Love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. (See Lev. 19:18; Deut. 23:3-6.) Jesus said, "Love everybody." Why?

“That ye may be sons of your Father.” Men may be regenerate and His sons in that sense, and yet be very unlike Him in their dealings with each other. Jesus wants His disciples to love men in such a way as that the world shall recognize the family relationship. God is the pattern for them to imitate, and there is promise as well as precept in the words, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” The **precept** we lay to our hearts, and in the power of the Holy Spirit shall ever reach upward, seeking to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. The **promise** we joyfully grasp, and like Paul and his shipwrecked company we cast our anchors and pray for the Day—even the Day when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. Then—

“At length—the final Kingdom,
No bound, no end possessing;
When Heaven and Earth—God, all in all,
Shall fill with largest blessing.
All root of evil banished,
No breath of sin to wither,
On earth—on high—
Naught else but joy,
And blissful peace for ever.”

THE KING'S FATHER

Chapter 6

It must surely have sounded strange to Jewish ears to hear the Prophet of Nazareth speak of God as a **Father**. In the meaning He attached to the term, it was a new title for God. The Jew had always thought of Him as the Great and Dreadful God, from Whose presence men were ever debarred and from Whose person they were ever separated by a great and guilty distance. The Prophets had often assured Israel of God's everlasting love, and through Jeremiah had come the word, "I am a **Father** to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born" (Jer. 31:9), yet the way into the Holiest had always been closed and even to favored Israel there was no free access into the presence of God, nor was such a thing dreamed of as familiar intercourse with Him, as between children and their Father.

Seventeen times in the Sermon on the Mount alone did Jesus speak of God as the Father. And not only did He refer to God as His own Father: indeed, there is but one such reference to Him and that the very last of the seventeen (Matt. 7:21.) In every other case it is either, "**your** Father which is in heaven," or "**thy** Father," or "**our** Father," as the disciples were taught to address Him in prayer.

Fatherhood and Brotherhood

Now it is a favorite device of the devil to disseminate error under the cover of truth, as one might introduce poison by means of a sugar-coating. And out of this precious truth of divine Fatherhood which Jesus brought from heaven to earth, Satan has made the sugar-coating for the poisonous doctrine, so widely taught in this day, known as the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man. There is just enough truth in the doctrine to make the error palatable. There is a sense in which God is the Father of us all, for by creation we are His offspring. He hath made us and not we ourselves. And as He is in this sense the Father of all men, so it follows that all men are brothers. So much of the doctrine is true. But we are asked to go much further. We are told by these latter-day prophets that because God is the universal Father in creation, and all men were made of one blood for to dwell on the face of the earth, therefore there is no proper distinction between men in their relation to God. Take off the sugar-coating, and bare the poison, and what have you here? No judgment for sin, for God is equally the Father of all: if some are saved, **all** are saved; there is no distinction. No **Cross**, for the all-Father is too merciful to punish anybody. No **Saviour**, and no **salvation**, for there is no need. Let us love one another and let us be liberal and broad, for we all came

from the same kind Father Who is not willing that any should perish, and we are "all going to the same place," which He has prepared for His children!

This is the teaching which goes forth to-day not only from infidel lecture bureaus and platforms, but also from so-called Christian pulpits. It is found with more or less sugar, not only in the confessedly atheistic literature of the day, but also in the professedly evangelical books and periodicals. One needs not to look far in any direction to find the slimy trail of the old serpent. Yet there is need of the anointed eye to discover his presence, for he is always in ambush and one needs constantly to pray for quickness of scent to detect the enemy's work, for he is busy in the least-suspected places. One of his most fruitful fields is in connection with the so-called "Sunday School helps." This is frequently a misnomer, for they are often hindrances rather than helps.

Now, what is the truth about the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, as the Lord Jesus taught it? It is not to be found in **Matthew**, for that is the Gospel of the Kingdom and the heirs are already the children when they enter into the Kingdom. We know that they became children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We know all that, but we never learned it through **Matthew's** Gospel of the Kingdom. In **Matthew** the term "Fa-

ther" is applied to God forty-three times, and in twenty-one of these instances He is mentioned as Father to the disciples, but it is always assumed that His Fatherhood is an established fact, and it is nowhere explained how the relationship came about. Five times in **Mark's** Gospel of Service is God called Father—twice as the Father of Jesus, once simply as "the Father," and twice as Father of the disciples. We are not informed in **Mark** how men became God's children. Luke's Gospel of the Manhood of Jesus mentions God twice as "the Father," eight times as Jesus' Father, and three times as Father to the disciples of Jesus. But, like **Matthew** and **Mark**, **Luke** does not tell us how this Fatherhood came to be.

Now, turn to **John**, the Gospel of the divine Son of God, and what do you find? Ah, here you find all about it. One hundred and fourteen times in this Gospel the title "Father" is applied to God—but, mark you, He is never called the Father of anyone but Jesus, until the very end of the book. Once, in Ch. 8:41, the Jews claimed God as their Father, but Jesus sharply rebuked them, saying unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father, **the devil**, and the lust of your father it is your will to do * * * If I say truth, why

do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, **because ye are not of God.**"

It is **John** who tells us that Jesus "came to His own and they that were His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were **BORN**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (Ch. 1:11-13.) In **John** we read of Jesus' interview with Nicodemus, during which that ruler in Israel was plainly told that he must be born again, or be for ever shut out from the Kingdom of God. And it is in that same chapter, the third, that Jesus declares the necessity of His own death on the Cross in order that men might be born again and thus become children of God. (Vs. 14-16.) And it was not until He had died the awful death of the Cross and gone down into the grave, and come forth in triumphant resurrection, that He ever spoke of His disciples as His brothers. "Go to **My brethren**," said He to Mary of Magdala," and say to them, I ascend unto My Father, and **YOUR** Father; and My God and **YOUR** God." (Ch. 20:17.) He was bringing many sons unto glory, having been made in all things like unto them. He was now not ashamed to call them brethren, and He was on the way to His Father and their Father with the glad word upon His lips, "Behold, I and the children which God

hath given Me.” This, then, is the Bible doctrine of God’s Fatherhood. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,” and none other.

Reality in the Kingdom

The sixth chapter of Matthew abounds with warnings against merely outward religiousness. The King admonishes the heirs of the Kingdom against hypocrisy and formalism. “Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; else ye have no reward with your Father Which is in heaven.” (V. 1.) God, Who “desireth truth in the inward part,” tells us everywhere in His Word of His abhorrence of unreality. God hates sham, wherever it is. It is true for the Kingdom not only, but for the Church also, that the thing to be desired is **heart-fellowship with God**, Who seeth in secret. (Vs. 2-4.) Prayer and fasting should not be mere outward forms, to be seen of men, but matters of real communion with the Father. (Vs. 5-18.) The hearts of God’s children and heirs should be centered on God, and all their treasure should be deposited with Him and not with men; in heaven and not upon earth: for where their treasure is there will their heart be also. (Vs. 19-21.) Singleness of heart and purpose is the thing most to be coveted. “A double-minded man is unstable in all His ways.” (James 1:8.) No man can serve two masters. It is impossible for any man to be fully yielded

to two masters. It is either God or Mammon; it cannot be both. It is either heaven or this world; one or the other must go. Friendship with the world is enmity against God and if the disciples are really children and heirs, and if they truly realize their position as such, they will surely be setting their affections on the things that are above and not on the things that are on the earth. (Vs. 22-24.) And if this be their attitude, all anxiety will disappear as mist before the sun; for anxiety is unbelief and they cannot doubt Him on Whom their affections are really set. They will not be troubled about themselves and their need of food and raiment, for their Heavenly Father knoweth that they have need of all these things. They will seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and, as a matter of course, all these things shall be added unto them. As for the morrow, it would surely be foolish for children of the living God to worry about to-morrow, for He will be living to-morrow as well as to-day. (Vs. 25-34.)

All this is for the heirs of the Kingdom, but we who are already children will one day be revealed as the heirs; and all this in principle is for us also; and not only for the future, but for the present. Language almost identical with this is addressed to the church in Phil. 4:4-7: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and sup-

plication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." May the Lord deliver us from sinning against Him by worrying about anything! Let us be thankful.

"I have nothing to do with to-morrow;
My Saviour will make it His care.
Should it be filled with trouble or sorrow,
He will help me to suffer and bear.

"I have nothing to do with to-morrow;
Its burdens, then, why should I share?
Its grace and its strength I can't borrow,
Then why should I borrow its care?"

Prayer in the Kingdom

The so-called Lord's Prayer is found in this chapter and deserves more than passing notice. Distinctively, the **Lord's Prayer** is that prayer offered by the Lord Himself in the seventeenth chapter of **John**. The Lord did not offer the prayer in **Matthew 6**, but taught it to His disciples in connection with the Kingdom. If we must have a special title for it, it would be better to call it the **Kingdom Prayer** or the **Disciples' Prayer**. It is found in this form in **Matthew** only, though in **Luke 11** a similar prayer was given to the disciples, in response to their urgent appeal that Jesus should teach them to pray as **John** had taught his disciples.

One approaches the discussion of this prayer with some hesitation, for it has a so generally accepted place among the Churches everywhere, that one is considered irreverent or even blasphemous who attempts to put it in its proper place, in the Christian mind. The prayer is perfect and beautiful in its proper place, but when it is removed from that place and put where its Author never intended it to be, it becomes a grievous occasion of stumbling to the people of God.

It ought to be unnecessary to remark that the prayer is not for **unbelievers**. It is a wicked thing to encourage those to use this prayer, whether in public or privately, who reject the Gospel and tread under foot the Son of God. How can an unbeliever approach God with the words, "Our Father," upon his lips. Indeed, he cannot approach God at all, until he has received the Lord Jesus Christ and become God's son by the new birth. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

On the other hand, a Christian cannot consistently use the **Kingdom Prayer**. because the prayer is based upon law and not upon grace. How can we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?" Is the Lord Jesus addressing the Church of God when he says, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses?" Surely not, For God's forgiveness for ourselves is dependent not

upon our forgiveness of others, **but upon our relation to Christ**, in Whom we **have** redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of His grace.** (Eph. 1:7.) We are not to **work** for forgiveness, for we already have it; and we are nowhere instructed to **pray** for forgiveness. Even when we fall into sin, we are not instructed to ask for forgiveness, but rather to **confess our sins** and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9.) And we are not to forgive others in order to be forgiven ourselves: rather, we are to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake **hath** forgiven us. (Eph. 4:32.)

It is sometimes said that this prayer applies to God's dealings with us in governmental discipline. An unforgiving spirit towards our brethren interrupts our communion with God, and then He dealeth with us as sons in chastening. But even in such a case the Father's forgiveness does not wait upon our forgiveness of one another. It waits rather upon our confession of sin; and it is always based upon **the work of Christ**, and not upon any "works of righteousness which we have done."

The Kingdom Prayer will have its proper and full use in a time yet future. After the coming of our Lord for His people and the catching-up of the Church, there will be a believing Remnant of Jewish disciples raised up, who will go everywhere preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom,

saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This Gospel of the Kingdom will then be preached in all the world for a testimony to all nations before the end of The Great Tribulation shall come and the Son of Man shall appear in His Second Advent—His coming to judgment. The Jewish Remnant will be terribly persecuted under the awful reign of the Antichrist and the power of Satan. (Rev. 13.)

Then shall they pray to their Father in heaven.

"Hallowed be Thy name," shall they pray. The name and number of the Beast is over everything and they long for the blessed time when even upon the bells of the horses shall be written, "Holiness unto Jehovah."

"Thy Kingdom come!" shall they cry, for the Kingdom of Evil has full sway everywhere.

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth!" This is their heart's desire after tasting the bitterness of His reign who worketh according to his own will.

"Give us this day our daily bread." The boycott is against all who refuse to receive the mark of the Beast upon them, and they can neither buy nor sell anything. It is their extremity and God's opportunity. He who fed Elijah shall also feed these who are His elect and are crying unto Him day and night.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This is proper Jewish ground and that will be the ground of their acceptance in that Day.

“And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.” That will be the awful Hour of Temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. (Rev. 3: 10.) **“Abandon us not to trial,”** is their plea, as they begin to feel the terrible power of the enemy. (Emphatic Diaglott translation.)

This is the end of the prayer, as in the Revised Version, the remaining sentence in the King James Bible being an interpellation.

It is to be observed that the **name of the Lord Jesus** does not occur in the prayer. Just before His crucifixion our Saviour gave to His disciples some instruction concerning prayer for the Day when He should be absent from them. It is **Church** and not **Kingdom** teaching, and thus is found in **John** and not in **Matthew**. He said: **“In that Day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. * * *** At that day ye shall ask in **My name**: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God.” (John 16: 23-27.)

This is the Magna Charta of the Church of God. **“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.”** Apart from Christ we can do nothing, but in Him all things

are possible. In us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing: but in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power. His name is the name which is above every name, and God has decreed and declared that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This, O Church of the Living God, is thy conquering sign—the name of Jesus. “The name of the Lord is a high tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” In giving thee His name He hath given thee all things—all things are thine. He hath even given Himself to thee, and thou art His, and he is God’s. Defeat is impossible for thee, for thou hast believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. The gates of hell shall not prevail against thee, for they tremble at the name of Jesus. Thank God, then, and take courage. Be not weary in well doing, for in due time will come the reaping. Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

“And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM

Chapter 7

In the concluding chapter of the **Sermon on the Mount** the Anointed King sets forth the principles of His Kingdom. Let us bear in mind that He spoke these words to His disciples as believing Jews, and representing primarily the nation of Israel in the relation it will sustain in the heavenly Kingdom when that Kingdom is set up upon the earth.

And yet we must not forget that the King's words were addressed to the disciples as heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, and although these teachings are not for the government of the Church of God as such, still they are written down for our admonition and instruction in the things pertaining to the future Kingdom; and they abound in great moral principles, which are always operative.

There is a real difference between a moral law and a moral principle on which such law is based. For example, when God thundered from Sinai and said to Israel, "Thou shalt not kill," He issued a law against murder. The basis of this law is the eternal moral principle that murder is wrong. Now God has never said to the Church, "Thou shalt not kill." He

has never put the Church under law at all. And yet the moral principle that murder is wrong is still true, and God has not failed to give the principle to the Church, though He has not given her the law.

Judging

The opening words of this seventh chapter of **Matthew** are often given a very wrong application in connection with the administration of the Church of God. The King's command, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is frequently urged as an argument against all exercise of discipline in the Church. Now the Church has received from her Lord and His accredited Apostles most explicit directions to guide her in the exercise of judgment. In **Matthew's** Gospel itself our Lord gave instruction for the guidance of the then future Church in this matter, in chapter 18, verses 15-20. These instructions cannot be obeyed without the exercise of judgment, first on the part of the individual in determining that his brother has sinned against him, and then on the part of the Assembly in deciding whether the aggrieved member has judged rightly. Again, in the specific case of a member of the Corinthian Church who was living in open and flagrant sin, the Spirit wrote by the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 5:9-13, expressly commanding the Church to judge the man and exclude him from its fellowship. "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." In the next

chapter the Apostle upbraids the believers for going to law before the unrighteous, and declares that matters in dispute ought to be brought before the Church instead of the courts. "Dare any of you," he asks—"Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteousness, and not before the saints? Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life? If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the Church? I say this to move you to shame. Is it so, that there cannot be found among you one wise man, who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? Nay, already, it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have law-suits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?" (Vs. 1-8.)

A careful examination of the King's command, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," together with its context, will reveal its meaning. He never intended that His disciples should set aside all exercise of the sense of judgment, but rather that they should not apply to others any judgment which they would be unwilling to have others apply to them. We may and we **must judge** that which is openly and mani-

festly evil, and separate ourselves from it. We may and we **ought** to exercise the discernment God has given us, **as to outward acts**: but there we must stop, for we can know nothing **as to the inward motives**. To the same Corinthian Church which He commanded to judge and to put away the openly sinful and wicked man, Paul wrote, in 1 Cor. 4:5, saying, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God." Here was a matter involving hidden things of darkness and counsels of the hearts. In such matters we are forbidden to judge, for we can know nothing of any man's heart-motives. God is able to look upon the heart, but man may look only upon the outward appearance.

We are, however, commanded to judge ourselves, for we know our own hearts well enough to know that many an outward action which looks fair enough to our brethren is after all selfish and sinful. When we are honest enough with ourselves to judge ourselves, it is a healthful exercise. But often we excuse ourselves and refuse to judge righteous judgment; and then God is compelled to deal with us. As it is written: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32.) This judging of ourselves will keep

the beams out of our own eyes and help us the better to remove the motes from our brother's eyes. For the heir of the Kingdom is not commanded, either here or elsewhere, to permit his brethren to go on in sin or error without seeking to deliver them. It is only that in order thus to serve them, he must himself have the single eye. Thus the Apostle exhorts the Christian Church in Gal. 6:1, 2: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

That the single eye is needed by the children of the Kingdom is shown by verse 6. They must be able to discern between truth and error. Thus only shall they be delivered from giving that which is holy to the dogs, and casting their pearls before swine. If they feel themselves altogether insufficient for this work of discernment, let them ask wisdom of God, Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not. (James 1: 15.) For every one that **asketh** receiveth, and he that **seeketh** findeth, and to him that **knocketh** it shall be opened. God is their Father and therefore He delights in giving good things to them that ask Him. He only desires for His children that in administering the Kingdom they shall do unto others whatsoever they would that others should do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Two Ways

There is but one way into the Kingdom. The gate is narrow: Jesus said, "I am the Way." The way is clearly pointed out by Him Who also said, "I am the **Truth**." And it leads unto life—for He is our life, even He Who said again, "I am the **Life**." There are two gates and two ways, but they face in opposite directions and lead to opposite goals. "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it." This is a timely word in these days, when liberality passes for piety, and to be broad means to be brotherly. May the Lord help us willingly to take our place with Him, even though men may be pleased to call us "narrow!" It is a proud qualification, when borne with Him and shared by Him.

False Prophets

Beware of false prophets. They are sheep outwardly, but wolves inwardly and really. How, then, may the disciple know them? For has he not only just now been forbidden to attempt to judge, as to inward things? He is to know them by their fruits, and these are outward things. The false prophet is to be judged by his prophesyings. A false teacher is to be tested by

his teaching. "If they speak not according to the Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20.) One does not need to examine the roots of a vine to determine whether it be a grape-vine or a thornbush. Figs do not grow on thistle weeds, nor do thistles grow on a fig-tree. The corrupt tree will finally be destroyed and in the meantime, though the fruit of the Spirit may be imitated, the counterfeit will be recognized by those who are led by the Spirit of God and are therefore the sons of God. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." It is quite possible for men to prophesy in the name of the Lord, and even to cast out demons and do many wonderful works, and yet so fail of essential and personal and vital connection with Him, as to render all their so-called service of no account. "I never knew you;" this is the word awaiting them. "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!"

Hearing and Doing

In the final paragraph of the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus reveals the great fundamental principle of life and growth of the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no life without the hearing and doing of the Word and will of God: and there is no growth worth while which is not based upon obedience. Everything depends upon the foundation. If we are building upon **The Rock** we are safe. Jesus Himself is the Eternal Rock upon which His people are building their house. "Other foundation can no man lay than

that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11.)

The Great Teacher

Surely, no man ever spake like this Man. "And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as One having authority and not as the scribes." He is the Great Teacher, at Whose feet every other teacher may sit to fill his little measure. Grace is poured into his lips, and when He speaks, His words have the almighty power of God in them. How glad the day when He shall come again! Do not our eager hearts long for the sound of His voice, when He Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God, to catch up to Himself in the air all His living and sleeping saints, to be forever with Him? Aye, we confess it. We are serving the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven. He is just at the door, and He may cross the threshold at any moment and come for His Bride. "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus!"

And then, afterwards, He will come back to the earth, with His saints, to reign in Mount Zion gloriously. It is His own word. He is now calling out the Church, gathering out of the nations a people for His name. "And to this agree the word of the Prophets; as it is written,

"After these things I will return,

"And I will build again the tabernacle of David,
which is fallen;

"And I will build again the ruins thereof,

"And I will set it up:

"That the residue of men may seek after the
Lord,

"And all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is
called,

saith the Lord, who maketh these things known
from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:
14-18.)

The house of David is now in ruins and his crown is worn by no man upon the earth. Twenty-five centuries ago God said of this crown (Ezek. 21:26, 27): "Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall be no more the same: exalt that which is low and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn overturn it: this also shall be no more, until He come Whose right it is, and I will give it Him."

What a blessed hope is ours! The Church of God awaits the Morning Star, even her Lover and Bridegroom, Who may at any moment pierce the heavens with His triumphant cry—"Come up hither!" (Rev. 4:1.)

And He is also the Hope of Israel. Speaking of that day, the Lord assured the Jewish Prophet, saying, "Thy people also shall be **ALL** righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. The little one shall be-

come a thousand, and the small one a strong nation: I Jehovah will hasten it in its time." (Isa. 60: 21, 22.)

And He is also the Hope of the Gentile world—the heathen world, now sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; for then shall they that come of Jacob take root: Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Isa. 27: 6.) For this the whole Creation is groaning and travailing in pain. For in that Day the Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

"He comes! He comes! the Bridegroom comes!

The Morning Star appears:

The cloudless morning sweetly dawns;

Saints, quit this vale of tears:

Your absent Lord no longer mourn;

Reproach no longer bear;

He comes! He comes! rise, happy saints,

To meet Him in the air.

"He comes! He comes! the Son of Man!

The second Adam now;

The King of kings and Lord of lords!

All knees before Him bow.

He comes! His Israel in the Land

Of Promise to install;

He comes! He comes! to clear away

The ruins of the Fall.

"He comes! He comes! the Bridegroom comes!

Oh, sinner, hear the sound,

Accept Him now, if you among

His chosen would be found:

Still mercy's offered—costless—free—
No longer turn away;
He comes! He comes! Oh! linger not,
Come while 'tis called to-day."

A PICTURE OF THE KING

Chapter 8

With the eighth chapter we enter upon a new main division of the book. The King has appeared according to the Scriptures, and His Kingdom has been formally proclaimed, together with the laws for its government. In the next five chapters, the eighth to the twelfth inclusive, we are to see the King manifested as such to His people, who, however, have no heart for Him and finally reject Him altogether.

What a picture is presented to us in this chapter! The Prince of the House of David comes down from the mountain and great multitudes follow Him. Let us behold Him, for this our God. This is He of Whom it is written, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called **Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom, to establish and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this." (Isa. 9:6, 7.)

Look upon Him then. He has left all and

come down to this poor, wretched, sin-cursed earth—this rebellious province in His Universe—to bring peace from the God of Peace. He was born King of Jews, born of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem His people out of the hand of the enemy. He now presents Himself to them as the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the true and lawful Heir to the throne.

And what a truly glorious King He is! As He moves majestically along, surrounded by this immense throng, disease and death flee from before His face. The awful plague of leprosy disappears at the touch of His mighty hand, for this is the hand that created the world and all things that are therein. A helpless paralytic, lying at a distance, bounds from his bed in perfect health and strength at the word of the absent King, and no wonder, for it is by the Word of His power that He upholdeth all things. A mother in Israel, lying sick of a fever, is perfectly healed by a touch from Him Whose touch quickens all things. Even the Creation itself is perfectly subject to Him when He rebukes the wind and the sea, and all nature lies in quiet subjection at His feet. And when Satan throws off the mask and thrusts his unclean spirits into the King's pathway, they are consigned to the swine and driven into the sea.

And yet the people did not want Him—they would not have this Man to reign over them. King of Heaven and Earth though He was,

He had no place to lay His head. Faith was so nearly gone out of Israel, that our Lord marveled when the Roman centurion believed in Him, saying, "With no man in Israel have I found so great faith." Even His own disciples were so frightened by the storm that they actually looked the King in the face and said, "We perish!" And when He had stilled the sea it never occurred to them that they had Immanuel on board—God with them—but they only asked one another, "What manner of **man** is this?" And, for a climax, we have the citizens of Gadara positively preferring their swine to the Lord of Life and Glory, and begging Him to leave their country!

Dispensational Signs

The miracles recorded in this chapter are not given in their chronological order. The arrangement here is peculiar to Matthew, and the Holy Spirit's obvious purpose in thus selecting and presenting these records is to set them forth in their dispensational sequence and significance, with reference to the Kingdom. Thus in verses 1 to 17 there are four signs, showing unmistakably the rejection of the Messiah by His own people Israel; followed by the present period, the Lord being absent from the earth, but still at work here by His Word, though chiefly among the Gentiles; then His return with blessing to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

The leper who came to Him and worshiped

Him, saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (verses 1, 2,) is a figure of the Remnant in Israel who believed on Him. Leprosy is ever a type of sin in all its corrupting power. Though the nation as such received Him not, there was a little company—here and there one—who came to Him and worshiped Him. To all such Jesus was indeed Jehovah-Ropheca—the Lord, their healer. He must needs touch them, in all their defilement, and this is the eyes of the Law would defile Himself. And it was even so, for Him Who knew no sin, God made to be sin on their behalf, that they might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) The healing is effectual. He stretched forth His hands and touched him, saying "I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed." Then Jesus sent him, in obedience to the Law, to the Priest. This was a testimony unto them, (v. 4), and it should have convinced the priests that God was indeed in the midst of Israel, for everyone knew that only God could heal leprosy. But the priests were never heard from. They were not seeking after God; they were too busy with empty forms and ceremonies to attend to this heavenly Visitor. They were offering their ceaseless oblations and sacrifices unto God afar off, and failed to discern that God was standing in their midst, waiting to be gracious. **Ritualism** was occupying the rightful place of **communion**.

Jesus enters Capernaum and is besought by a

centurion whose servant is sick of the palsy and grievously tormented. It is another type of sin. Jesus offers to come to the sick man, but the centurion declares that it is not necessary. "Only say the word and my servant shall be healed." Jesus marveled, for here was a believer, and he a Gentile. It was a foreshadowing of the dawning Dispensation. Speaking to them that followed, the King declared that in Israel He had not seen such faith, and that the time was coming when many should enter the Kingdom from the east and the west while the natural children of the Kingdom, that is, the people of Israel, should be excluded. Then to the centurion He said, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee," and the servant was healed in that hour.

Capernaum means "the place of consolation," and it may speak to us of consolation for Jesus as well as for the centurion. As Isaac found comfort in Rebecca after his mother's death (Gen. 24:67), so this our Isaac has great joy in the people which He is now gathering from the Gentiles for His Name. The key-word of the Dispensation is that given to the centurion—"As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." He went back to his home, walking by faith. He no longer saw his Lord, but he believed Him; and though the work of healing was done in the Lord's absence, yet it was lacking in nothing, for He had said the Word. No Word from Him is void of power.

All this is precious—to us and to Him—but Israel is on His heart. He cannot give them up. They are a stiff-necked people, but His patience has no limit, and His love never weakens. Besides, has He not promised? Has not the Word proceeded out of His mouth? And is God, after all, only a man, that He should lie? Or a son of man, that He should repent? He will return to His own, and His people shall be willing in the day of His power. (Ps. 110.)

Peter's sick mother-in-law is a fit picture of Israel in her present condition. She is sick, and that speaks of **helplessness**. Helpless, indeed, is Israel, for she knows not Him Who alone can help her. She is sick of a fever, and that speaks of **restlessness**. Long ago did Jehovah her God, through Moses, warn her of the time when she should find no rest for the sole of her foot. He does not mean her to find rest until she finds it in Him Who cried in her ears when she would not hear—"Come unto Me and I will give you rest." But, thanks be to God, she is not **comfortable**. Her fever is running high, and she is casting about for a remedy. Many are the physicians who have tried their skill in her behalf. Baron Hirsch prescribed American colonization, and American colonization was tried. The result was discouraging, though colonies were established in North and South America. For the most part they are deserted villages, for Israel's land is in neither North or South America. Then came Dr. Herzl and

Zionism. According to his prescription there must be a Jewish state in Palestine under the suzerainty of Turkey. The Sultan was favorable to the plan until the time came for executing it, when he changed his mind, and then Dr. Herzl died. The next physician was Israel Zangwill. His scheme was a Jewish colony in Africa and he obtained an offer from the British Government of a tract of land for the purpose in the Soudan. But the Zion Congress rejected the proposition, declaring that Israel wanted to locate in or near **Palestine**. Then came the dethronement of Abdul Hamid, and to-day we see the tide of Israel flowing towards the promised land.

Meanwhile, the fever increases. Israel is everywhere agitated and excited as never before in modern times. And is there no help? Is there no relief for the sick woman? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:22.) The Great Physician is near. The time to favor Zion, yea, the set time is come. He is just at the door and He will soon enter. Apart from Him there is no help for the sick woman, but He is all-sufficient. When Peter's Lord shall return to Peter's house, then He will see her, lying sick. He will touch her hand, for He will not then be absent but present, and she will look upon Him Whom she pierced. And then, instantly,

the healing will come, the fever will leave her; and she will arise and serve Him.

And what will follow? Why, the whole world awaits the healing of Israel. As soon as Israel is delivered from the fever of unbelief and rebellion, she will arise and minister unto her Lord; and then shall they bring unto Him many possessed with demons; and He will cast out the spirits with a word, and heal all that are sick—and then shall it be fulfilled which was spoken through **Isaiah** the Prophet, saying, "Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases." It is a picture of the blessing to come upon the whole world after the return of the King and the conversion of Israel. Their fall is the riches of the world even at this moment, and their loss is the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but **life from the dead?** (Romans 11:12, 15.)

Divine Healing

Much confusion has resulted from a failure just here to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." Many who emphasize the so-called doctrine of Divine Healing base their teaching upon such scenes as we are now considering in the eighth chapter of **Matthew**. And we are told that because Jesus Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases, therefore it is contrary to His will that His disciples should now have any in-

firmities or diseases. It is all very plausible and attractive, especially in this day when even the Lord's people are so unwilling to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings, or to be made conformable unto His death. Without entering into the subject more fully here, it is worth while to point out that bodily healing is a characteristic feature of the **Kingdom**, and is usually associated in the Scriptures with the Gospel of the Kingdom. In the **Church of God** it is not characteristic but exceptional. The reason is that the Church is appointed to a ministry of suffering. The glory is yet to be revealed, for it belongs to the Kingdom and will not come to the Church until the Kingdom is manifested. It must be remembered that the infirmities that He took included **death** itself as well as disease. And we cannot rightly claim to be delivered from **disease** until **death** has been abolished in fact as well as by promise. Potentially, all this has been accomplished on the Cross, but the Lord's people are still dying, and will continue to die until the Day of Adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

All confusion in this matter would be cleared up if God's people would stop reading Church truth into the Gospel of the Kingdom and remember that the manifestation of the Kingdom is deferred until the Church is completed. As for the sufferings of this present time, we reckon that they are "not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us-ward.

For the earnest expectation of the Creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. And the Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.** For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is **not hope**; for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience **wait** for it." (Romans 8:18-25.) This Scripture ought surely to make it clear that though we are already children of God, the revelation of that fact is yet to come; that though our bodies have been bought with the redemption blood, we have not yet entered into the full benefit of it, nor can we until the great Day of Adoption—to wit, the redemption of our body—at our Lord's coming. It is of that Day that Paul writes to the Philippians, saying, "Our citizenship is in Heaven: whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.) Or, as it is written again, "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of

an eye. The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." And again, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And yet again, "When He shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory"—that is in a glorified state or condition. (1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 John 3:2; Col. 3:3.)

That will be divine healing, indeed. Meanwhile let it be remembered that He is perfectly able to heal even now, when healing is according to His will, whether it be with the use of means or without. And if He deliver us from sickness, we shall be thankful; if he choose for us to suffer bodily affliction, we shall also thank Him, for He knoweth best, and He doeth it. Blessed be His holy name!

Absolute Monarchy

The absoluteness of the King's authority is emphasized in the remainder of the chapter. Though so completely rejected as to have nowhere to lay His head, He still insists upon unquestioning obedience from those calling Him Lord. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," said one disciple. To bury one's own father is surely a high and solemn duty, but there is a still higher obligation, and that is to obey the Lord. When he says "Follow Me," there must be no hanging back, no hesitation, no wavering. Is He your Lord? Then **obey** Him. Is He your Master? Then **yield** to Him. Is He your

Shepherd? Then follow Him. And when He says "Follow Me," do not reply, "Suffer me first." No, nothing else **first**: follow Him **first**. Was not that His word—Seek ye **first** the Kingdom? This is the meaning of Lordship.

The Blessed Hope

The Church of God is tossed upon the sea of the world. The wind dashes against the little boat and it is apparently swallowed up by the waves. Her Lord is in the midst of her, but to unbelief He seems to sleep, not caring. He quietly arises and seeing the powers of darkness behind the storm, He rebukes the wind and the sea, and a great calm follows. It is a picture of His personal return. The waters * * * * are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. (Rev. 17:15.) "The wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isa. 57:20.) His creation is crying out for Him, and when He comes and speaks, there will be a great calm.

The Power of Darkness

In the final paragraph of the chapter (vs. 28-34) the King comes into direct contact with the realm of the evil principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, the hosts of wicked spirits. Two victims come forth toward Him from the tombs, the place of death, possessed with demons. The King is recognized by the unclean spirits, who cry out at His ap-

proach, saying, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" They know their Judge when they see Him, and they know also that there is coming a time of judgment. They are cast out of the human bodies they have possessed and permitted to enter into a large herd of swine near by. **Mark** tells us that the swine numbered about two thousand. "And, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."

This miracle, which is recorded in the Kingdom Gospel far out of its chronological order, is full of meaning. From it we learn that when the Kingdom is manifested, the King will not only bring about a great calm amongst the nations, but He will also bring swift judgment for the ungodly and disobedient. If I mistake not, the swine, in the Bible, is always a type of the **merely outward professor of religion**. In Leviticus 11:7 the Law provided that "the swine, because he parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed, but cheweth not the cud, is unclean." The cloven hoof is outward; chewing the cud is an inward and hidden thing. In Matt. 7:6 the King warned His disciples against giving holy things to dogs, or casting pearls before **swine**; the meaning being unmistakable. In Luke 15:15 the prodigal son sought and failed to find satisfaction in the **swine's** food, the husks the swine did eat. So, it is often seen that a child

of God, out of communion with the Father, seeks enjoyment and comfort in the husks of this world. The mere professor can thrive on them, but different food is needed for the born son. Again in 2 Peter 2 the hypocritical professor who finally turns from the truth is set forth as a natural brute beast, a dog turned to his own vomit again and a **sow** that had washed to wallowing in the mire. It is a disgusting spectacle—the form of godliness with none of the power thereof—it is just “a jewel of gold in a **swine’s** snout.” (Prov. 11: 22.)

This miracle is very evidently a picture of the terrible judgments awaiting Christendom—that great mass of empty profession and hollow pretense. It will be spued out of the Lord’s mouth, and though He will deliver His own little company of witnesses from the power of the devil, He will turn that very power against the herd of **swine**, that great crowd of self-seeking hypocrites who are always feeding near by. These shall all perish in the waters of judgment, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. 2: 10-12.)

A truly sad commentary on the condition of the human heart is furnished by the last verse of our chapter. God was there and the whole city came out to meet Him. And when they saw

Him they besought Him that He would depart from their borders. To be sure, He had wrought untold blessing and salvation for these two human souls, but two thousand swine had been destroyed and it was too costly. It was all very well to have religion, but religion must not interfere with **business**. God was all right, so long as He kept His place, but they did not want Him too near. If He stayed in their country it would ruin the pork industry, for God's Law had declared against swine flesh as food. Let Him depart from them, where though He might still see them, they at least would not have to see Him, face to face. How sad it is—how sad and how shameful!—"They besought Him that He would depart out of their borders!" God forbid that any to whom these words may come shall beseech Him to depart from them, but may we all receive Him, for it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

THE KING REJECTED AND REJECTING

Chapter 9

As the eighth chapter of **Matthew** closes with one of the saddest utterances in all Scripture, so the ninth opens with one almost equally sad. In the former it is recorded that the whole city of Gadara met the Lord of Life and Glory at its gates and begged Him to go away. In the latter it is written that "He entered into a boat and crossed over, and came into His own city."

Let us learn from this that though the Lord's outstretched hands are full of blessing for those who will have it, it is yet true that He does not force Himself upon those who do not want Him. Man, you may get rid of Jesus if you persist in rejecting Him. The door of grace is ajar to-day, but there is coming a time when the door will be shut. To-day is yours; to-morrow is uncertain. To-day if you will hear His voice and harden not your heart, you may come and welcome, but there is no assurance that you will have another opportunity. **Now** is the accepted time. **Now** is the day of salvation. Jesus is passing by. Call ye upon Him while He is near. Cry for your life, for in another moment He may be gone, and your doom eternally sealed.

"Haste thee away! Why wilt thou stay?
Risk not thy soul on a moment's delay.
Jesus is waiting to save thee;
Mercy is pleading to-day."

His Own City

He came to Capernaum, "His own city!" How lovingly does the Spirit of Truth breathe those words, "His own city!" Thanks be to God, even in the day of His rejection there was left His own city—the city of consolation—where He found those that were looking for the redemption of Israel. To be sure, Capernaum afterwards rejected Him and was terribly upbraided, but for the time being at least it was His own city. And it is the same to-day. In the general and disheartening apostasy everywhere prevailing there is yet a little band of believers who are looking for the coming of the Redeemer. This little company is without the camp, bearing His reproach. Capernaum means "the city of consolation," and this faithful flock, longing for the appearing of the Chief Shepherd, is our Lord's consolation in this Day of Rejection; it is Capernaum to Him, "His own city," a place where He may lay His head. And for them—these who love His appearing—the glory is dawning. Here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come. In the little meanwhile their rest is in Him and His rest in them—"His own city."

Into Capernaum a helpless paralytic is borne to Him, lying on a bed. Bodily healing, ever a

feature of the Kingdom, is sought and obtained, but it is preceded by the far more and important **spiritual** healing, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. The scribes protest against this, and bring for the first time the charge of **blasphemy** against the King. He meets the accusation by proving His divine authority, but the result was discouraging; for though the people marveled and glorified God, it was not because He had Himself come down to dwell amongst men, but because He had given such authority unto **men**. The paralytic is a picture of a helpless sinner, who must be brought to Jesus in all his impotence and who receives power to walk. The expression, "He **arose** and departed to his own house," is suggestive of resurrection. And indeed every conversion is a resurrection; the sinner hears the words of Jesus and believes Him that sent Him, and the instant result is that he "hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed **out of death into life**." (John 5:24.) Every time the Gospel is preached unto sinners, it is the dead hearing the voice of the Son of God, and they that hearken shall live. (John 5:25.)

Publicans and Sinners

That the blessing of the Lord is for all men, without distinction, is shown by the call of Matthew, the writer of this book we are now studying. He was a despised tax-collector under the hated Roman rule and was looked upon as an

apostate by his fellow countrymen. But Jesus called him, saying, "Follow Me," and there was instant response. He arose and followed Him.

And the blessing was not for Matthew alone among the Publicans, or for a few of them, one here and there. At dinner the King sits down with many Publicans and sinners. The Pharisees are amazed at this, but Jesus presses home the truth that the outward religiousness of the Pharisees did not commend them to God. They themselves were also sinners, if they did but know it. But as they did not know it, and would not learn it, He had no mission to them. The Physician had not come to those who did not need Him. His call was not for the righteous, but for sinners. He was about to die for the **ungodly**—the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save **sinners**. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was **lost**.

Law and Grace

The disciples of John the Baptist were puzzled because the King's disciples did not fast, as they did themselves, and the Pharisees. The King reminded them that true fasting was a sign of mourning, and with the Bridegroom present, the sons of the bridechamber could not mourn. The days would come, however, when He should depart from them for a season and then there

would come the fasting. The fasting of the Pharisees was a matter of **Judaism** and the King had not come to patch up the old and ragged garment with the new cloth of the Gospel. He was too wise to try such a thing for He well knew that the experiment could not succeed. The new cloth, instead of filling up the hole in the garment, would tear it further and make the hole larger. The new wine of Christianity was not to be put into the old wineskin bottles of Judaism, for to try such a thing would be to destroy the meaning both of law and of grace. The skins would become useless and the wine lost. The new wine must have new wineskins and thus both should be preserved.

Thus does the King warn His disciples against the admixture of the old religion of law-works and the new gospel of salvation by grace alone. And yet this is precisely what has been done throughout Christendom. Judaism has been patched up and adapted everywhere among the Churches and the old garment is labelled "Christianity." The result is a confusing mixture, which is neither Judaism nor Christianity, but a ritualistic substitution of dead works for a trust in the living God. The new wine of free salvation has been poured into the old wineskins of legalism, and with what result? Why, the skins are burst and ruined and the wine is spilled and most of the precious, life-giving draught is lost. The Law has lost its terror, because it is mixed with grace; and grace has lost its beauty and

character as grace, for it is mixed with law-works.

Now, may God Himself deliver us from any part in this grievous outrage! Either we are saved by grace, which is God's unmerited favor, or we are for ever lost. "But if it is by grace it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." (Romans 11:6.) We are not Antinomists—we do not plead for an excuse to sin—no regenerate man can do such a thing; but we insist that law and grace are two distinct and contrasting principles which cannot be intermingled without destroying both. As Dr. Scofield puts it: "It is of the most vital moment to observe that Scripture never, in any dispensation mingles these two principles. Law always has a place and work distinct and wholly diverse from that of grace. Law is God **prohibiting** and **requiring**; grace is God **beseeking** and **bestowing**. Law is a ministry of **condemnation**; grace, of **forgiveness**. Law **curses**; grace **redeems** from that curse. Law **kills**, grace **makes alive**. Law **shuts** every mouth before God; grace **opens** every mouth to praise Him. Law puts a great and guilty **distance** between man and God; grace makes guilty man **nigh** to God. Law says, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth;' grace says, 'resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' Law says, 'Hate thine enemy;' grace, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.' Law had few missiona-

ries; grace is to be preached to every creature. Law utterly condemns the best man; grace freely justifies the worst. (Luke 23:43; Rom. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.) Law is a system of probation; grace, of favor. Law stones an adulteress; grace says, 'Neither do I condemn thee.' Under law the sheep dies for the shepherd; under grace the Shepherd dies for the sheep. Everywhere the Scriptures present law and grace in sharply contrasted spheres. The mingling of them in much of the current teaching of the day spoils both, for law is robbed of its terror and grace of its freeness." ("Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," by C. I. Scofield.)

Is it not significant that in this illustration the Lord Jesus speaks of a **man** instead of a **woman**, in connection with such household duties as sewing a patch on a garment and storing up wine in wineskins? In **Matthew**, **Mark**, and **Luke**, it is recorded the same way. Well, the Man has not done the patching, nor has He put the new wine into the old wineskins. It is the woman—that it, the professing Church, in a figure—who has wrought the mischief. And this has been the result of departing from the Word of the Man, Christ Jesus, and resorting to worldly devices, and organizations, and inventions.

The separate order of Priesthood in the Churches is just a patching up of the old garment. And this hateful error—and I speak deliberately and advisedly: it is the doctrine of

Nicolaitanism which thing He hates (Rev. 2: 6, 15)—this hateful thing is found not only in the confessedly hierarchal Churches: none of us is free from it. God has made us an equal brotherhood, but we are not content to have one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus: we must have someone between us and the Mediator. We must have a Priest, and so we make Priests out of our preachers. They are "Clergymen" and "Fathers" and "Reverends," and they must be better than other Christians, for they are "ordained ministers!" Only **they** shall preach the Gospel with the authority of the Church! Only **they** shall be permitted to pronounce a benediction! Only **they** shall baptize believers! Only **they** shall "administer the sacrament," which is supposed to mean the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine at the Lord's Supper!

My brethren—my "holy brethren"—you who call yourselves "laymen"—I appeal to you: I do not plead for liberty for the preacher to do wrong: God knows I have no desire for a lower standard for the Pastor; but I do plead for a higher standard for his fellow-members, his co-partners, his brother-Priests, his co-equal brethren in the body of Christ. Take your place beside him. Stop looking to him as if he were your pattern—look to **Jesus**. "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." Call no man "Father" or "Reverend"—God is your Father and Holy and Reverend is **His Name** (Psalm

111:9). Let no man stand between you and your Christ, for He hath made us **all** Kings and Priests unto God, and the smallest, humblest member of His body is as near to Him as any other. Let us not speak of the **clergy** and the **laity** in the Church of God; all such distinctions are for ever abolished and we are all one Man in Christ Jesus.

Life From the Dead

The next paragraph (verses 18-26) presents a beautiful typical and dispensational picture. The daughter of the Jewish ruler is a type of Israel, "the daughter of Zion." "My daughter is even now dead," is the message brought to the King's ears. "Behold, they say, our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." (Ezekiel 37:11.) The King has already started on His way to raise her from the dead. He arose and followed the sorrowing father, "and so did His disciples." (V. 19.) When He comes to raise up Israel His saints will come with Him. (Jude 14.) But on His way He is intercepted by a woman, who is delivered from an incurable disease by one believing touch of His garment. She is a type of the Church, saved parenthetically, between times, as it were, while Israel lies dead and hopeless, waiting for Him to come.

Finally, He reaches **the house**, an always significant expression in Matthew, and He stops all the signs of mourning, saying, "Give place; for

the damsel is not dead but sleepeth." This is foolishness unto the crowd and they laugh Him to scorn. Nevertheless, He puts them all aside and the dead girl is raised to life. Thus it will be when He comes to judgment. Everybody is ready to furnish music for Israel's funeral, for all agree that Israel is dead. But when He comes He will put them all forth and then shall Israel rise up, and the fame of it will go forth into all that land. (V. 26.)

Ephraim and Judah, the two branches of Israel, are like two blind men. In that Day they shall cry out, saying, "Have mercy on us, Thou Son of David." Then will He come **into the house**, and they will believe on Him, and they will see with their eyes and be healed. In that Day He will not charge them to tell no man, but He will send them everywhere with the good news. And they will spread His fame in all that land. (V. 31. Compare Isa. 66: 19, 20.)

Israel is a dumb man, possessed with a demon under Satan's power. In that Day the demon will be cast out, and the dumb man will speak, and the multitudes will marvel. His enemies will explain that the Lord Jesus is yielded to Satan, and that "by the Prince of the demons casteth He out demons." What awful blasphemy!

With Israel fully restored—raised from the dead, able to see and able to speak, great results will follow. The Millennium will be at once introduced. Verse 35 is a picture of it:

Jesus going about all the cities and villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

This is what it will be when the King comes. In the meantime the multitudes are just like a great lot of sheep distressed and scattered, not having a shepherd. He is moved with compassion, and He puts the remedy into the hands of His disciples. That remedy is prayer. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into the harvest." (V. 38.)

And that is His plan, for the Kingdom not only, but also for the Church. Is it not true to-day that the harvest is plenteous? "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white already unto the harvest." (John 4:35.) And are not the laborers few? With all our boasted foreign missionary movements, we are only trifling with a great task, and our progress is backward instead of forward. And what shall we do about it? Do about it? What *can* we do about it? Apart from Him we can do nothing. But we can do all things through Him that strengtheneth us; and it is our business to do this thing. It is not something that only a few can do. We can all pray; and if we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit is here to help our infirmity; and He will lead us to pray the Lord of the harvest, that He may send forth

laborers into **His** harvest. It is written, "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" And how shall they be sent, except He, the Lord of the harvest, shall send them. Otherwise their going is worse than their remaining at home. May God help us to pray!

THE KING AS LORD OF THE HARVEST

Chapter 10

Confusion must always result from failure to rightly divide the Word of Truth, and a good illustration of this rule is furnished by the tenth chapter of **Matthew**. The directions for the special mission of the twelve Apostles, for example, have been taken by many as a model for all preachers of the Word. It is therefore insisted that preachers should never work singly, but always in pairs. Also, that they should travel without money and without baggage. Medical missions are sometimes based upon the command found here, to heal the sick, as well as preach the Gospel. On the other hand those who teach the doctrine of "Divine Healing" and forego the use of medicines altogether, point to this chapter to prove that the Lord's program of evangelization includes miracles of healing along with the preaching of the Gospel. It seems to have escaped their notice that the Apostles were authorized and empowered not only to heal the sick, but also to **raise the dead**. This item in the program is conveniently omitted.

Now, I have no word of disparagement for medical missions, for I doubt not that God is pleased to use these instrumentalities for the spread of the Gospel, and when this great end

is kept in view, there can be no reasonable objection to the means employed. Nor would I deny the great truth of divine healing, whether with the use of means or without. But neither the medical missionary nor the "Divine Healer" has the right to appeal to the tenth chapter of *Matthew* for his warrant.

The Church and the Kingdom

The trouble is that somehow, in studying the Bible, we are always viewing it from the standpoint of the Church, as if the Church were everywhere present, and always the center about which everything else revolved. Just as the ancient astronomers, beginning with the assumption that the earth was the center of the material Universe, came to grief in their calculations; so the modern Bible reader, beginning with the assumption that the Church is the center of the spiritual Universe, is landed in an inextricable maze of hopeless reasoning. It was only after the astronomers had discovered that the sun was the center about which the earth revolved, that they were able to arrive at satisfactory conclusions concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies. Even so, until the believer sees that not the Church, but the Son of God, is the center of everything in the spiritual realm, he is without the key to the Scriptures, and is unable to unlock their sacred secrets. And this discovery does not depreciate the value or the dignity of

the Church of God, any more than the astronomical discovery depreciated the value or dignity of the planet upon which we live. Though so small as compared with the great sun about which it moves, and though a rebellious province in the great Universe of God, yet is the earth greatly honored, for the Lord of Life and Glory, the Creator and Preserver of all things, Himself visited the earth in human form and laid down His life to bring this little planet back to Himself and deliver it out of the hand of the enemy. Likewise the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, though so small and significant when compared with Him Who loveth her and hath loosed her from her sins in His own blood, yet how greatly honored is she! The Church is His workmanship, His masterpiece, His poem. (Eph. 2: 10, Gk) And just as the earth is yet to be the place of His dwelling and the seat of His throne, so the Church will be manifested as the bride of the Lamb, sharing His glory and majesty.

Meanwhile, as to the interpretation of Scripture, let it be carefully noted and remembered:

First—That the **Kingdom of Heaven** and the **Church of God** are not identical, but very far from it.

Second—That the Church was **not yet in existence** during our Lord's personal ministry in the earth. Its beginning is found in the second chapter of **Acts**.

Third—That the truth concerning the Church

was never made known until the beginning of Paul's Apostleship (Eph. 3). We must not, therefore, except in types and symbols, expect to find it in **Matthew**.

Fourth—That the Kingdom was offered to **Israel**, and **only** to Israel.

Fifth—That the Kingdom, temporarily rejected by Israel, is now held in abeyance until the Church is **completed**.

Sixth—That the twelve Apostles were Israelites **before** they were Christians and that their ministry has a direct bearing toward the Jewish people, as well as toward the Church of God.

Seventh—That the Gospel of the **Kingdom** is not identical with the Gospel of our Salvation.

One of the best figures of the Church of God in the whole Bible is seen in Acts 10:9-16, where Peter, falling into a trance, saw a great sheet let down from Heaven, filled with all manner of beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air. Peter, the strict ritualist, looked upon these things as unclean, as indeed they were, according to the Levitical ordinances. But God had cleansed them and therefore they were no longer unclean. By this vision Peter learned that God was no respecter of persons and that even the unclean Gentiles were eligible to the privileges of the Gospel of Christ—that whosoever, whether Jew or Gentile, believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. (V. 43.) Like the great sheet, the Church of God has a heavenly origin and a

heavenly destiny. It has been let down out of heaven and it will be received up into heaven.

But all this was unforeseen by the Old Testament Prophets. This parenthetical Dispensation of nineteen centuries were hidden from them, and they searched diligently what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ Which was in them did signify when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. (1 Peter 1:11.) Isaiah cried, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder." (Isa. 9:6.) But Isaiah did not know that between the two parts of that sentence there should be an interval of nearly two millenniums. Gabriel told Mary that she should bear a Son named Jesus; that He should be great, and that He should be called the Son of the Highest. He also told her that the Lord God should give unto Him the throne of His Father David: that He should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and that of His Kingdom there should be no end. Gabriel did not tell Mary—and probably Gabriel did not know it for it was yet a mystery hid in God—Gabriel did not tell the mother of Jesus that between the birth of the Son of the Highest and His ascension of David's throne there should be a gap of nearly two thousand years. And the Lord Jesus Himself, when in the tenth chapter of **Matthew** He gave directions to His disciples, reaching down to the End-time and even to the Second Advent of the Son of Man (vs.

22, 23), did not inform them that that End-time and that Second Advent should be deferred for almost twenty centuries and preceded by the calling out from the Gentile nations of a people for His name.

The Jewish Dispensation, in which Jesus lived upon the earth in the days of His flesh, had not been completed when the Church Dispensation began—and, indeed, it has not yet been completed. The 490 years of Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks (Daniel 9) had not fully run their course when Messiah was cut off. Indeed, the terms of the prophecy provided for an interval of indefinite duration between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of years, and the final week of seven years is pushed as it were, into the future, to make way for this parenthetical Age, while the Church of God, like her typical Apostle, is born as one out of due time. When the Church is complete—when the elect number, according to God's eternal purpose, has been called out—then shall the Church be caught up to meet her Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4), and then shall at once begin the fulfillment of Daniel's final heptade of years. The Lord Jesus, in the tenth chapter of *Matthew*, has all this in mind, and gives His Apostles directions, not for the Church Age, but for the Jewish Age then present and including the time of "The Great Tribulation" in the final seven years. With this borne in mind, all in the chapter becomes clear.

If it be asked why, if all this be true, we should study this Scripture at all, suffice it to say that with all Scripture, it is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. (2 Timothy 3:16.) Though not given for the direct government of the Church of God, it is still for her teaching, and so far as principles are involved it is for her guidance. Israel is, indeed, in the foreground of this Scripture, but all these things happened unto them for types and they are written for our admonition. (1 Cor. 10:11.)

The Lord of the Harvest

In the first verse of our chapter, the King, having commanded His followers to pray the Lord of the harvest that He should send forth laborers into His harvest, now takes His place as Lord of the harvest and proceeds to unfold His plans for His ingathering. He first calls His twelve disciples **unto Himself**. All fruitful service in His harvest must begin just here. The laborer must first be called unto Him. And then He gives them authority. In this case it is authority to perform miracles. In any case, whenever He sends forth the laborers, they go fully equipped for the labor unto which He appoints them. Many are sent forth by men, and they fail, as a matter of course. Many are self-sent, and they also fail, and quite as naturally. It is only those who go forth with His authority that can stand in the day of battle.

The Apostles

The twelve disciples are first called Apostles here. An Apostle, in this connection, is one sent forth as a messenger, but with absolute authority as representing the Sender. The Apostles are named in pairs and thus sent forth, for according to Israel's law the testimony of two witnesses was true. (John 8:17, Deut. 17:6; 19:15.)

In all the lists of the Apostles, given by the various Evangelists, Peter is named first. The reason for this will appear in the study of the sixteenth chapter. Judas Iscariot is invariably last named, and always with the terrible word, "who also betrayed Him."

Mission of the Twelve

In verses 6 to 15 there are rules of conduct for the special mission of the Twelve. They were to go only to Israel. The Gentiles had no part in their ministry for the time being. They were to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom as they went, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Literally, it is, "The Kingdom of the Heavens hath drawn near." It was the message of John the Baptist and also that of the Lord Jesus Himself in all His public preaching up to this time in His ministry. It was a proclamation to Israel, a formal presentation of the Kingdom, with the King walking amongst them, ready to take His great power and reign, if His people were ready to receive Him. The ministry of the

Apostles was to be attested by miraculous signs and wonders, for these are always accompaniments of the Kingdom. Having received freely, they should also give freely. No provision was to be made beforehand for their support, for they were going amongst their brethren and the laborer was worthy of his food. They were to search out the worthy: that is, those having a heart for the message and willing to receive the messengers. As for those who should reject them, a terrible judgment was reserved for them.

This little company of twelve men out of all Israel prefigured the Remnant of Israel who shall be raised up for this very purpose during the last days. Verses 16 to 23 describe the persecutions of that awful time, "The Great Tribulation," which will come upon Israel just before the Second Advent of the Messiah. The witnessing remnant will be as a little flock of sheep in the midst of the wolf-pack. They must be wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. They will be delivered up by men to the Jewish Councils (literally, Sanhedrims) and scourged by the Synagogues as apostates and renegades. They will also be brought before Governors and Kings for the Lord's sake. They need not be anxious, however, for the Spirit of God shall guide them and speak through them. Families shall be separated in that awful time, brother delivering up brother unto death, fathers turning against their children, and children against their parents. As for the witnesses, proclaiming the approach of

the Kingdom and the coming of the King, they shall be hated of all men for His name's sake; "but he that endureth to **the end** shall be saved." (V. 22.)

This expression is a key to the chapter. It is found repeated in **Matthew 24:13**, where "The Great Tribulation" is more fully described. It is for the encouragement of the witnessing Remnant in the terrible days of the Time of Jacob's Trouble. And the promise of verse 23 will be a mighty incentive to endurance in that Day—"But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." It is a definite promise that the Remnant of Israel shall be preserved through "The Great Tribulation." (Compare Matt. 24:34.)

The Lord Jesus, in **Matthew 24**, speaks at great length of His return as Son of Man at the close of the Tribulation period: "Immediately after the Tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear to the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall

gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Eternal Principles

The remainder of our chapter is devoted to the enunciation of certain great and eternal principles, true always and applicable in any Age. The disciple is not above his master nor a servant above his lord. It has pleased our Lord and Master to identify His disciples and servants with Himself. If they suffer, it is in fellowship with His sufferings and the result of this identity with Him. Fear not, for the Day is coming when the hidden things of darkness shall be revealed. Be not afraid of men, who at most can only kill the body; rather fear God, Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. He even attends to the sparrows, and as for His children, every hair of their heads is precious to Him. They have confessed His Son before men in a time of rejection. The Son therefore confesses them before His Father—His Father and theirs. Those who deny and reject Him shall themselves be denied and rejected. Even though there may be outward profession of loyalty to Him, as with Judas, yet with the heart rejecting Him, the outward profession is but blasphemy.

Jesus is indeed the Prince of Peace, but the everlasting peace must be brought in through judgment. His word is a two-edged sword, often cleaving families assunder, and a man's foes are

often those of his own household. Jesus demands the chief place in the heart's affection. Father, mother, son, daughter—all must take a subordinate place, for He is Lord. Only those are worthy of Him who take the Cross, and that means death to the flesh with all its schemes and ambitions. It is only thus that any man really confesses Jesus as Lord.

And finally (vs. 40-42) the King reiterates the authority of His messengers and His own identity with them. Men may reject them but it will be at their peril. "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

What a gracious word is this! The Lord of Life and Glory thus takes His place as one with His people. "We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones," and "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." May God help us that we may ever be delivered from despising one of His little ones, remembering that in despising them we despise Him. May He ever help us that we may discern the Lord's body, in all its members!

"O, blessing rich! For sons of men
Members of Christ to be!
Joined to the Holy Son of God
In wondrous unity.

"O Jesus, our great Head Divine,
From Whom most freely flow
The streams of life, and strength, and warmth
To all the frame below;

"Keep us as members sound and whole
Within Thy body true;
Build us into a temple fair,
Meet stones in order due.

"Keep us good branches of Thy vine,
Large store of fruit to yield;
Keep us as sheep that wander not
From Thy most pleasant field.

"For one with God, O Jesus blest,
We are, when one with Thee,
With saints on earth and saints at rest,
A glorious company."

THE KING'S FACE TOWARDS THE CROSS

Chapter II

In this chapter we may clearly see the clouds of rejection and hatred gathering about the head of Israel's Messiah. He had come unto His own, and His own had received Him not. They had looked for a King, Who should bring deliverance to Israel, and this Man was as a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness, and no beauty such as they desired to see in Him. Thus He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and His own people, His kinsman according to the flesh, His beloved Israel, hid their faces from Him, despising Him and esteeming Him not.

The Lamb of God was on His way to the Cross of Calvary. As the Sin-Offering for His people, He must die without the camp. He would bear their griefs and carry their sorrows, even though they abhorred Him. They esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted for His own sins. He was the Sinless One, ever holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. But while enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, He had come to bear their sins, being wounded for their transgres-

sions and bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was to be laid upon Him and with His stripes they should be healed. All they like sheep had gone astray; they had turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah had laid on Him the iniquity of them all. (Isa. 53.)

But were they not justified in looking for a great and glorious King? Had not God revealed through their Prophets that the Coming One should sit on David's throne, exalting His nation to the very highest place amongst the nations of the earth? Was it not written that Jehovah should raise unto David a righteous Branch, and that a King should reign and prosper and execute justice and judgment **in the earth**? That in His days Judah should be saved and Israel should dwell safely and that His name should be called Jehovah-Tsidkeenu? (Jeremiah 23.) And had it not been promised over and over again that in connection with His advent and exaltation as King over the whole earth (Zechariah 14) the people of Israel should be gathered into their own land, being for ever delivered from the thralldom of alien rule? (Deuteronomy 30:1-6; Isaiah 11th and 12th chapters; Ezekiel 36th and 37th chapters, etc.)

Yes, all this is true. It is a great error to charge the people of Israel with gross and carnal views because they looked for a King and a Kingdom to be manifested on the earth. God had promised all this and much more. But the

Scriptures also declared that this same Messiah should be a vicarious sufferer, bearing His people's sins. (See Isaiah 53, above.) He was to be crucified (Psalm 22:16; Zech. 12:10; 13:6); He must be cut off, though not for Himself. (Daniel 9:26.)

The Jews, therefore, are not to be censured for believing the plain testimony of the prophetic Word concerning the Messiah's **glory**, but they ought to have gone on and believed also the equally plain testimony of that prophetic Word concerning the Messiah's **suffering**. It was for this that the risen Lord Jesus upbraided His own disciples whom He overtook on the way to Emmaus. (Luke 24.) "O fools," He exclaimed—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe **all** that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have **suffered** these things, and to enter into His **glory**? And beginning at Moses and **all** the Prophets, He expounded unto them in **all** the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Vs. 25-27.)

What would the same risen Lord say to-day to those disciples who have practically given up the Biblical hope of His return to fulfill His promises to Israel? Would He not again cry out, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe **all** that the prophets have spoken?" Having experienced the **suffering**, ought not the Christ now to enjoy the **glory**, according to the promise. The **suffering** is past—let us thank God for that. And shall we not look for the

glory? The Scriptures have not left us in doubt about it. God is just now visiting the Gentiles to take of them a people for His name. After this is completed—after the Church of God is fully gathered out—"After this," His own word for it, "After this **I will return**, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things." (Acts 15: 16, 17.) May we ever pray to be delivered from the awful sin of unbelief, which doth so easily beset us—the terrible blasphemy of making God a liar! May we ever be quick of scent in the things of the Lord (Isa. 11: 3, margin), so that we shall believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Having entered into the rich benefits of the **sufferings** of the Christ, let us be always rejoicing in the hope of the **glory** that shall follow. (See 1 Peter 1: 11.)

In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of **Matthew**, Israel's rejection of the Messiah is fully manifested, followed in chapter 13 by His rejection in turn of the nation and His forecast of the Kingdom in its mystery form during the personal absence of the King. All this will become clear as we go on. For the present we are concerned with the eleventh chapter.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding His twelve disciples, He

departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." (V. 1.) The Lord Jesus is always intimately associated with His servants in their work. Though they may not see Him, yet He is laboring with them. It is even so to-day. When Jesus was bodily upon the earth, He **began** to do and to teach. He has never ceased, but He is still the great Doer and the great Teacher. (Acts. 1: 1.)

The Perplexity of the Baptist

In verses 2 and 3 there is a message of inquiry from John the Baptist: "Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples, and said unto Him, art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" It is no disparagement of this great Prophet, John the Baptist, to say that he was sorely troubled by what had taken place. He was the last of a long line of Old Testament Prophets, and they had all of them experienced difficulty in regard to the understanding of their own messages. Peter writes (1 Peter 1: 10-12) of our salvation, "concerning which salvation the Prophets sought out and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they min-

ister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into."

John the Baptist, for example, had been called to present the Messiah as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29.) That meant suffering and humiliation and death. But he had also been sent before Him to proclaim Him as the terrible Judge and mighty King, Whose fan was in His hand, and Who should thoroughly cleanse His threshing-floor, gathering His wheat into His garner and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matt. 3: 11-12.) What did it all mean? That Jesus was the Christ of God, the Messiah of Israel, John had no doubt. He believed that He was Jehovah—the Coming One—in the flesh. But why, then, should this Messiah be going about healing and preaching, and why should His forerunner be languishing in a dungeon, while Israel's throne was usurped by a lecherous vassal of heathen Rome?

The Lord Jesus thoroughly understood John's perplexity, but His answer was to point to the Scriptures. By His references to the 35th chapter of Isaiah, Jesus shows that His ministry for the time being was just a foregleam of the Kingdom in the Day of its full manifestation. John would not stumble concerning these things if he were careful to examine all the Scriptures

concerning the Christ. "Great peace have they that love thy Law, and they shall have no stumbling block." (Psalm 119: 165.)

The Lord's glowing testimony to John the Baptist is unequalled. This man was not a reed shaken with the wind. He was a Prophet and much more than a Prophet. John was the greatest of the Prophets and the greatest of men up to his time, because to him was given the exalted privilege of proclaiming the Kingdom with the King already present. This was a wonderful thing, but it was small and insignificant after all, when compared with the position of one actually in the Kingdom, when that Kingdom shall be really manifested.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Vs. 12-15.) This passage has greatly troubled the commentators. In Luke 16: 16 our Lord said: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; from that time the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." The meaning is that John had preached the Gospel of the Kingdom with such power that those who had received the truth had not counted any sacrifice too great to obtain that Kingdom. In spite of every obstacle and opposition and persecution

they had entered violently into the Kingdom. They had **striven** to enter in at the strait gate. They had been so eager and so much in earnest about it that nothing could keep them out. They had become, in their intense desire, men of violence, and had taken the Kingdom by force. All Prophecy and the Law headed up in John's message. If only Israel would receive it, this was Elijah, which was to come. What a solemn moment was this! And what a solemn word: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

But Israel was deaf, both to John and to Jesus. Like trifling children, they would not be suited with anything that God might do for them, or with any messenger He might send unto them. John lived the life of an ascetic separate from the people, and they said he had a demon. Jesus lived among the people, close to them—like the Good Samaritan, He came **where they were**—and they called Him a glutton and a winebibber! But, thanks be to God, there was a little remnant of believers. Wisdom had a few children and by them Wisdom was justified (vs. 16-19). In the **Proverbs** Wisdom is a figure of the Lord Jesus. (See specially chapter 8.) In Luke 7: 29, 30, our Lord's meaning here is made clear, for it is written that as Jesus preached, "all the people when they heard, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the Lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him."

John's ministry was not a failure, then, but a glorious success. All who had received his message and were baptized of him, also received Jesus and justified God. All who failed to receive John's message also rejected the Lord Jesus.

But what a feeble remnant it was that showed any heart for the Word of God! The mass of the people would have none of it. The great crowds, the cities, Chorazin and Bethsaida, according to their light, were worse than Tyre and Sidon. Capernaum would suffer a severer judgment than Sodom (vs. 20-24.) And what, then, of London, Paris, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco? The sins of our modern cities is appalling, when viewed in the blazing light of nineteen centuries of the Gospel of the Son of God. If Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum deserved such scathing denunciation from the patient Christ so long ago, what must he think of an American city in this year of grace 1910?

It is only by the mercy of God that we were not all cut off without hope long ago. With Isaiah and Israel we may well say, "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." (Isa. 1:9.) Let us, with our Lord Jesus, be thankful for the little company of believing ones. It was "at that season"—when His rejection seemed most complete and when there was apparent de-

feat all about Him: "At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in Thy sight." (Vs. 25, 26.)

Defeat was impossible for the Son of God. "All things," said He, "have been delivered to Me of My Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will-eth to reveal Him." (V. 27.)

"Come Unto Me"

Then follows that wonderful invitation, contained in verses 29-30: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." These words, though spoken to the deaf ears of Israel, have sounded round the world, and are treasured up to-day by multitudes of the heavy-laden children of men who find in them sweet comfort and strong consolation. There is rest in Him for Israel, and Israel shall one day obtain it, though for the time being that people is blinded in part. Thanks be to God, there is a remnant according to the election of grace turning from Moses, unto Him Whom Moses preached. To such

Jesus fulfills His word—"I will **give** you rest." And as they go on under His easy yoke and His light burden, and as they follow on to know Him, they do **find** rest unto their souls.

But He is also given for a light to the Gentiles. Whosoever will may come. By Him all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, are justified from all things. He died for all. He tasted death for every man. He is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

May God help you to come, then, for He is the Way, and the Way is made clear. No one cometh unto the Father but by Him. He is the Door, and him that cometh He will in no wise cast out. Whoever you are, whatever you are, wherever you are—

"Come to Jesus, come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus just now.
Just now come to Jesus;
Come to Jesus just now.

"He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you just now,
Just now He will save you;
He will save you just now."

THE KING AS LORD OF THE SABBATH

Chapter 12

The Sabbath is never mentioned in **Matthew** until the twelfth chapter. The complete rejection of the Messiah by Israel is marked in this chapter by His break with them concerning the Sabbath. This was the last thing remaining of their violated covenant with Jehovah. It had been given to them as a **sign** of the covenant, and now, as they had deserted the **covenant**, He was about to set aside the **sign**. His purpose in giving them the Sabbath is shown in Exodus 31: 12-17, where "Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou unto the children of Israel saying, Verily **My Sabbaths** ye shall keep: for it is a **sign between Me and you** throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah that doth sanctify you. * * * * Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the **Sabbath**, to observe the **Sabbath** throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a **sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever**: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed."

Israel's violation of the terms of the covenant was constant and grievous. In Ezekiel 20: 12-

26 the case against them is stated in detail: "I gave them My **Sabbaths**, to be a **sign between Me and them**, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctify them. But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness: they walked not in My statutes and they despised My judgments. * * * * I said to their children in the wilderness, I am Jehovah your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My **Sabbaths**; and they shall be a **sign between Me and you**, that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God."

Thus it may be seen that the **Sabbath** is a purely **Jewish** institution. In the Law of Moses it was given only to Israel and it has never been given to the Gentiles nor to the Church of God. To speak of the **Lord's Day** as the **Christian Sabbath** is to pour new wine into old wineskins or sew new cloth on old garments. **There is no Sabbath**, Christian or otherwise, in this Dispensation. The **Lord's Day** is an immensely higher day than the Jewish **Sabbath** ever was. It is not, however, a day of law; but a day of grace.

The Sabbath was a **sign between God and Israel**, that they might know that He was Jehovah their God. But they did not know Him. When He visited them they would not receive Him. He stood amongst them, holding out His hands toward them, ready to heal their backslidings, but they would not have Him in their knowledge. And yet when He laid His hand

upon the **Sabbath** they cried out against Him and called Him a sinner and a blasphemer.

How like the human heart is all this! Naturally it is enmity toward God, and yet it clings tenaciously to empty religious forms, as if **these** could take the place of **Him**. Though they have no desire for the **power** of godliness, men cannot get along at all without the **form** of it. Thus did Israel seek to put the **Sabbath of the Lord** in the place of the **Lord of the Sabbath**.

"At that season Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields; and His disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat." (V. 1.) There was nothing in the Law of Sinai to prohibit this action of the disciples, but the Rabbis had added innumerable rules and regulations to the Law, and these traditions of men had been imposed upon the people by the Scribes and Pharisees. These enemies of Jesus were quick to seize upon any occasion to entrap Him. "Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath." (V. 2.)

The answer given to this objection by our Lord is very suggestive. He first points His questioners to what David did when fleeing from Saul. David was the anointed of God to be King of Israel, but he was rejected and his enemies sought his life. Arriving at the house of God at Nob, he asked Ahimelech the Priest for bread for his followers. The story is told in the twenty-first chapter of **First Samuel**. "And the Priest answered David and said, There is no

common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread." David replied, "The bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel." How could there be anything sacred to God, when God's chosen man was rejected and fleeing for his life? "So the Priest gave him hallowed bread." So now, what did the **Sabbath** amount to after the covenant was defiled? What was the value of the outward sign when the inward reality was gone?

"Or," Jesus went on, "have ye not read in the Law that on the **Sabbath** day the Priests in the Temple profane the **Sabbath** and are guiltless? But I say that one greater than the Temple is here." (Vs. 5, 6.) His reference was to the provision of the Law written in **Numbers 28:9, 10**, that the Priests should offer "on the **Sabbath** day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: this is the burnt offering of every **Sabbath**, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering." To fulfill this requirement the Priests must work on the Sabbath, and they were not accused, therefore, of violating the Law. And here was One greater than the Temple, for it was He Who had given them the Temple, and the covenant, and everything beside. The Temple itself, He knew, would soon be torn down, for it had become a hollow mockery, where men put sacrifices and forms and ceremonies in the place of love and justice and mercy. "But,"

Jesus went on, "if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." (V. 7.)

His reference here is to **Hosea 6**, where we read: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. Therefore have I hewed them by the Prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me." (Vs. 4-7.)

The End of Judaism

And then, with one majestic word, the Lord Jesus swept away the last prop from beneath these blind leaders of the blind. "**The Son of Man,**" said He, "**is Lord of the Sabbath.**" (V. 8.) It was a terrible blow and by it Judaism was smashed to pieces. The Sabbath was gone; the Priests were gone; and in their place there stood One greater than the Temple, greater than the Priests, and Lord of the Sabbath! What had they left? If only they would receive Him, everything was left. In Him they would have found their Temple, their Priest and their Sabbath rest. But they would not have Him—and their house was left to them desolate.

His Long-Suffering

How hard it was for Him to give them up! One last effort should be made. "He departed thence and went into their Synagogue"—it was **their** Synagogue now; He had no part in it. "And behold, a man having a withered hand. And they asked Him saying, Is it lawful to heal on the **Sabbath** day? that they might accuse Him." (Vs. 9. 10.) They are now out in the open, hunting for His life. They will not be content until they have killed the Heir and seized the inheritance. He knows their hearts, and yet with what marvelous patience does He answer them! "What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the **Sabbath** day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the **Sabbath** day. Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And He stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other." (Vs. 11-13.) This was the Lord's doing and a great cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving, to say nothing more of it, "but the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him." (V. 14.)

So the die was cast, and Israel's doom was sealed. Jesus needed not that anyone should tell Him what was in man, and He clearly saw that there was nothing but the intensest hatred for Him among His people. "And Jesus perceiving

it withdrew from thence." (V. 15.) This is a solemn word. He "withdrew from thence." From that moment His testimony is confined to the future, in view of His approaching death on the Cross, to be followed by His prolonged absence from the earth and His return in power and great glory at the End of the Age. Meanwhile Israel is set aside, blinded in part, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. (Romans 11.) A remnant out of Israel, according to the election of grace, will, however, turn to Him while He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. Thus we read here that as He withdrew from thence many followed Him and He healed them all, and charged them that they should not make Him known; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, "Behold, My Servant Whom I have chosen; My Beloved in Whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles hope." (Vs. 15-21.)

Bruised Reeds and Smoking Flax

This quotation from Isaiah 42: 1-4, explains why Jesus did not smite His enemies before Him, instead of meekly turning from them. He

had leaned on Israel and had found them a bruised reed. Their worship was so corrupt as to be a grievous offense unto Him, as smoking flax. But he had not yet come to judgment, and therefore He would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, until at His Second Advent He should send forth judgment unto victory. Meanwhile in His name should the Gentiles hope.

The Unpardonable Sin

Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb; and He healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, Is this the Son of David? (Vs. 22, 23.) It was plain that this work was supernatural and superhuman. The Pharisees, not willing to attribute it to the Spirit of God, declared that Jesus had an evil spirit—that He cast out demons by Beelzebub the Prince of demons; that is, by Satan himself. Replying to this, the Lord Jesus shows the absurdity of supposing Satan arrayed against Satan. It was not likely that the Prince of the Power of the Air should be fighting against his own forces. How, then, should his Kingdom stand? And what had they to say about the exorcists among themselves—were they, too, casting out demons by Beelzebub? Jesus had not been so foolish as to attempt to rob the strong man—that is, Satan—without first binding him.

The very first act of His ministry was to overcome this "strong man" in the wilderness, and now He was spoiling His house. The lines were sharply drawn and the fight was on. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not scattereth." (V. 30.) To ascribe to the devil the work of the Holy Spirit of God was a most terrible act of blasphemy, which should never be forgiven. (Vs. 31, 32.)

This, then, is "the unpardonable sin"—to charge the Lord Jesus Christ with acting by the power of Satan—to accuse the Holy Spirit of God with being the unclean spirit of Satan! **Mark** very plainly states that Jesus uttered this warning, "because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark 3:30.) Their cup of iniquity was full to overflowing and He lifted up His voice against them. "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good," said He, "or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Vs. 33-37.)

The Sign of Jonah

This was terrible denunciation for these enemies of God and His Christ, but it fell on deaf ears. Their only response was, "Teacher, we would see a sign from Thee." (V. 39.) They were surely an evil and adulterous generation. They should have but one sign, the sign of the Prophet Jonah. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (V. 40.)

Among the graveclothes brought out from the tomb of Roman Catholicism is the tradition of "Good Friday" as the day of Jesus' death. There is nothing in the New Testament to sustain such a tradition, and it is surely plain enough that there were not three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. Believing that Jesus knew all about it, we are forced to conclude that the crucifixion must have taken place earlier than Friday. If it be objected that the death of our Lord was on the day before the Sabbath, it is sufficient to reply that the Passover Feast always began with a Sabbath, which was not the weekly Sabbath, but a **special** day of rest and convocation set aside by the Law. And of the Passover Sabbath in this instance it is written, "and that Sabbath was a **high** day." (John 20:31; Lev. 23:7.)

What an awful judgment awaits the hard-

hearted Jewish leaders who drove the Son of God to the Cross! Even the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba shall witness against them; for here was a greater than Jonah and a greater than Solomon. (Vs. 41, 42.) Israel had been delivered from the unclean spirit of idolatry, but nothing had taken its place, and the unclean spirit would some day return with reinforcements, and the last state should be worse than the first. This points to the time of **The Great Tribulation**, when Israel shall be found worshipping the Beast and his image, until the Deliverer shall come and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (Vs. 43-45.)

"My Brother, and Sister, and Mother"

Mary and her sons, the mother and the brothers of Jesus, suddenly appear on the scene, seeking to speak to Him. **Mark** explains (3:21) that Jesus' friends at this time went out to lay hold on Him, for, they said, **He is beside Himself**. "And one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to Thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hands towards His disciples, and said, Behold, My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven he is My brother, and sister, and mother." (Vs. 46-50.) Thus are natural relationships set aside to make way for the higher

relationships of the new family, the holy nation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people, the children of God.

To do the will of God—this is the unalterable condition of entrance into the family of Jesus. Whosoever shall do the will of His Father Which is in heaven,—these are His brother and sister and mother. And this is the greatest thing in all the world—to know the will of God and to do it. This is the ultimate aim of our existence, the supreme good, the *summum bonum*—to know God and to please Him. And whosoever lives this life, having this ambition, fulfilling this condition, he is Jesus' brother. And would you know the will of God concerning you? This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent. "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him."

MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

Chapter 13

The thirteenth chapter of **Matthew** contains seven parables in which the rejected Messiah sets forth the condition of the Kingdom of Heaven **after** its rejection by Israel and **until** the return of the King. The number seven always suggests completeness, and the parables give a complete view of the present Dispensation, extending from our Lord's personal ministry, following Israel's rejection, to His personal return at the End of the Age. This sevenfold preview of the Dispensation differs from that contained in the seven epistles of **The Revelation**, in that in **Matthew** we have in view the whole Kingdom, while in **The Revelation** the picture is confined to the Churches. In both pictures there is revealed an awful condition of apostasy and false profession, but in **Matthew** the horizon is larger, for here we are not only looking at the Churches, but our minds are occupied with the whole realm of profession. There is much profession entirely outside of the Churches, for even where men have no connection with the Churches there is much talk of Christian **civilization**, Christian **institutions**, Christian **countries**, Christian **government**, and so on. What is commonly called "Christendom" is what we are gaz-

ing upon in the thirteenth chapter of **Matthew**. It includes everything called "Christian."

The first verse of the chapter is full of significance: "On that day went Jesus **out of the house**, and sat **by the sea side**." It is a prophetic suggestion of His final break with Israel. No word of God is void of power or empty of meaning. It was "on that day"—that is, on that memorable **Sabbath** day, when the Lord Jesus took His true place among His people as the One greater than David, greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, the Lord of the Sabbath. It was His rightful place, for either He was all this or He was nothing. But they rejected Him and sought to kill Him. Therefore "on that day went Jesus **out of the house**." And where did He go? So far as His own people and country were concerned, He had no place to go. It is very notable that He "**sat by the sea side**," for the sea in the Scriptures is ever a type of the restless Gentile nations. (Dan. 7:2, 3, 17; Rev. 17:1, 15.) It is His long delayed reluctant response to His people's action in turning from Him. He now turns from them, "going out of the house" and leaving it desolate; and He, in a figure, visits the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His own name. He "**sat by the sea side**."

"And there were gathered unto Him great multitudes, so that He entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitudes stood on the beach." (V. 2.) The boat is a type of the true Church of

God, in the world and not of it, as the boat was in the sea and not of it. The Lord Jesus is in the midst of her, and out of her He is now engaged in teaching the multitudes, who, though they are not actually in the Church, are yet lighted up by her presence, for she is the light of the world.

“And He spake to them in parables.” (V. 3.) The reason of this form of teaching He explains in verses 11-17 in response to a request from His disciples. It was God’s judicial hand upon Israel, because of their deliberate rejection of His Son. Refusing the light already given them, further light was denied them. This is a law of revelation, that God only reveals truth so far as we go on obeying it. When we rebel against truth already known to us, we not only receive no new revelation, but we lose that we already have. “For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.” (V. 12.)

It may be noticed that these seven parables are divided in the usual way. The first **four**, this being the earth or world number, show man’s failures, while the last **three**, this being the Trinity number, show God’s thoughts and purposes, perfectly worked out, for of course these cannot fail.

The Sower

In the first parable the Lord Jesus is seen as

the divine Sower. Failing to receive fruit from His vineyard, Israel, He goes out to sow the Word of the Kingdom broadcast. Only one-fourth of the seeds come to fruitage. The Sower Himself gives us the interpretation of the parable in verses 18-23.

The Wheat and Tares

The parable of the wheat and tares (vs. 24-30) shows the mixed condition of reality and hypocrisy in Christendom, so-called, extending to the End of the Age. Our Lord's interpretation of this parable is given in verses 37 to 43. By it we learn that the Dispensation is to end without a converted world. The tares do not grow into wheat at the End-time, but they are gathered up and set aside for judgment. We shall be terribly disheartened and grievously disappointed if we are looking for the conversion of the world before the return of the Son of Man.

It ought to be noted here that the Church is not in view in all this, nor is the Church Dispensation the "Age" so often referred to. It is the Jewish Age, which has been interrupted by the parenthetical Church Dispensation. The Jewish Age is not yet finished, nor will it be until the Church is removed from the earth. Then the Jewish Dispensation of **Daniel's** time will be completed with the final seven years of **Daniel's** seventy "weeks." The end of the seven-years period is the End of the Age spoken of in these

parables. The End of the world is not mentioned at all, our English translations to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Mustard Seed

In the parable of the mustard seed (vs. 31, 32) we come to familiar ground. The little seed grows into a large spreading tree. It is the same type as in the fourth chapter of **Daniel**. Nebuchadnezzar had received the Kingdom from the hands of God, but in man's hands it was corrupted and furnished shelter to the beasts of the field and fowls of the air. The same thing is seen in the parable of the mustard seed. It is Babylon over again, which is only another name for what men are pleased to call Christendom. It has a profession, a form of godliness, but it denies the power thereof. Heavenly in its origin, and opposed at first to everything of this world, it finally grows and spreads abroad, being conformed to the world. It is now a semi-religious system, very great and very popular. The birds of the first parable failed to fully destroy all the seed, but they now seek and find rest in the branches of the tree. In other words, the devil and his messengers, having failed to uproot true Christianity in the beginning, are now opposing it in a much more subtle way. They are to be found in the very midst of "the system" and identifying themselves with it. It is quite the thing nowadays to "have religion." And Satan, ever alert, has taken ad-

vantage of this condition to put his own representatives in the forefront as "religious leaders." The Church has always been cursed by these false leaders, and the Spirit of God speaking of them in 2 Cor. 11: 13-15 says that "such men are false Apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into Apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if **his ministers** also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

The Leaven

Another parable spake He unto them: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto **leaven**, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, it was all **leavened**." (V. 33.)

This fourth parable has been a battle ground for the commentaors. There is no need of confusion, however, and no possibility of confusion, if we are willing to bow to the authority of the Scriptures and allow them to interpret the parable for us. The popular conception that the **leaven** is the Gospel of Christ, and that this Gospel is to pervade and permeate the world until the whole world is saved, is without Scriptural basis. Not only does such an interpretation place our Lord in the position of contradicting all His other parables by the use of this one, but it also destroys the whole Bible as a source of authority in the matter of its own un-

derstanding and interpretation. Now comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we shall find that **leaven** is never once used in the Word of God except as a type of **corruption**. In connection with the first Passover, Israel was commanded to put away **leaven** out of their houses. (Ex. 12:15.) In Lev. 2:11, the Law provided that no meal offering should be made with **leaven**. In Lev. 6:17, in the Law of the meal offering, it is written, "It shall not be baked with **leaven**. * * * * It is **most holy**." The two wave-loaves of the Pentecostal offering (Lev. 23:17) were baked with **leaven**, because they typified the Church of God, and signified that we are accepted in the Beloved in spite of our indwelling evil nature, for He was made sin for us.

In His personal ministry our Lord often used **leaven** as a type of evil. At one time His disciples forgot to take a supply of bread with them. "And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread." But Jesus explained His words, and "then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **teaching** of the **Pharisees** and **Sadducees**." (Matt. 16:5-12.) In Luke 12:1 the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**;" and in Mark 8:15 He also warned them against the **leaven** of **Herod**, evidently meaning **lust for worldly power**.

Leaven, then, is a figure of **corruption**. Now who is the **woman**, hiding the **leaven** in the meal? It is significant that this is the only mention of a woman in the seven parables. She is easily recognizable as the **false professing Church**, corrupting by **false doctrine and sinful conduct**, the **food** of the children, which is the Word of God. Hiding the **leaven** in the meal, she leaves it there, and the corrupting process continues until the true food is all gone, being utterly lost in the repulsive and poisonous mass—the whole lump leavened.

It was against this awful danger that Paul later warned the Galatian churches, which were receiving the Judaizing teachers. With the Lord's parable of the leaven in mind he wrote: "Ye were running well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion came not of Him that calleth you. **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.** I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be." (Gal. 5:7-10.)

And again when the Corinthian Church was indulging in sinful practices, the Apostle wrote: "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you. * * * *

Your glorying is not your good. Know ye not that **a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?** Purge out the old **leaven**, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are **unleavened**. For our Pass-over also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old **leaven** of malice and wickedness, but with the **unleavened** bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5: 1-8.)

The Hid Treasure

It is at this point that the parables are divided into two parts, as already indicated. The four parables so far reviewed show how impossible it is for men to produce anything but failure and disaster, apart from Christ. We shall never have the **Kingdom** manifested here **until the King comes back**.

And He is coming back. Just as truly as He went away, He will return. And this is carefully indicated in the record before us. In the first verse we saw Him departing from Israel and turning to the Gentiles. He "**went out of the house and sat by the sea side**, and there were gathered unto Him great multitudes." But He hath not forgotten Israel. In verse 36 is it written, "**Then He left the multitudes, and went into the house**." Blessed be His Holy name! He is ever true and faithful, and Israel is still beloved for the fathers' sakes. In the very next parable (v. 44) He has His kinsmen in mind:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a **treas-**

ure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

The treasure is Israel, now hidden in the field, which is still the world. The Man who in His joy goes and sells His all and buys the field is our Lord Jesus Himself. It was on the Cross of Calvary that He paid the price—He sold all that He had—and by right of purchase as well as by right of creation the world is His. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24: 1.) And Israel is His treasure, now hidden but one day to be brought forth in glory. "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. 27: 6.) In that Day they shall remember and obey His Word, as He said, "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a Kingdom of Priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. 19: 5, 6; Ps. 135: 4.)

The Pearl of Great Price

But in dying for Israel, He was also paying the redemption price for more than Israel:

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went out and sold all that he had, and bought it."

The Man here also is none other than our Lord Jesus. He came seeking goodly pearls. He came to seek and save that which was lost. Pearls are found at the bottom of the sea, and the sea is again the Gentile world. He hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. The pearl of great price is the true Church of God, and its value may speak to us of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:18.) The pearl is one, for it typifies the one body. The great price was His own precious blood—"Ye are bought with a price." In order to pay the price He yielded all that He had. He hath redeemed us, and now we are His. (See 1 Pet. 1:18, 19.)

The Drag Net

The parable of the drag-net (vs. 47-50) speaks of the great ingathering of Gentiles after the Church is removed from the earth and just preceding our Lord's return to the earth as Son of Man to set up the Kingdom. (See Rev. 7:9-14, R. V.) The bad fish which are cast away are those who yield to the Beast in that awful Day. (Rev. 14:9-11.)

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

And now, may we not ask one another the question of Jesus (v. 51): **"Have ye understood all these things?"** We may understand them if we have a heart for them and a will to submit ourselves to them. It is possible for each

one of us to be like the "man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (V. 52.) There is much need of disciples who shall have a treasure out of which they may bring rich stores of truth for the enlightenment and edification of the family of God.

Blind Nazareth

The chapter closes with a brief account of our Lord's visit to Nazareth. His neighbors were blinded and thought of Him only as the carpenter's son. "And He did not many mighty works there **because of their unbelief.**" (V. 58.) What a terrible day was that for Nazareth! God was in their midst and they knew Him not, because their hearts were steeled against the truth by their unbelief. He never passed that way again. May God forbid that any one of us may so sin against Him and against our own souls as to reject His pleadings as He is now passing amongst us! For aught we know, this may be our very last opportunity to hear the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth. Like the blind man of Jericho, let us rise now and call upon Him while He is near.

"Jesus Christ is passing by,
Sinner, lift to Him thine eye;
As the precious moments flee,
Cry, 'Be merciful to me!'

“Lo—He stands and calls to thee :
‘What wilt thou then have of Me?’
Rise, and tell Him all thy need;
Rise, He calleth thee indeed.

“‘Lord, I would Thy mercy see;
Lord, reveal Thy love to me.
Let it penetrate my soul,
All my heart and life control.’

“Oh, how sweet! The touch of power
Comes,—it is salvation’s hour;
Jesus gives from guilt release,
‘Faith hath saved thee, go in peace.’”

SUFFERING IN THE KINGDOM

Chapter 14

The fourteenth chapter opens with an account of the death of John the Baptist, related here out of its chronological order, but significantly placed here, in view of the Messiah's rejection by His people.

Let us learn from this tragic recital that **God's thoughts are not as our thoughts.** From man's standpoint John's life was a pitiable failure and its end a dreadful calamity. From God's point of view the Baptist's life was a glowing success and its end a glorious consummation. Seen from earth, there was merely a drunken orgy, with a licentious man and a dissolute woman as central figures, resulting in the cruel murder of a Prophet of God. Looked at from the battlements of heaven, there was God in the midst, making the wrath of man to praise Him and delivering His faithful witness from the horrors of a filthy Roman dungeon to the glories of the throne-room of the Eternal. To our distorted vision there appears the humiliating degradation of a defeated soldier. When we get the true focus upon it, it is an honorable promotion of a victorious warrior.

The appointed path for the servant of God, in this world which hates God, is the path of

suffering. Men cannot endure anything that reminds them of God. A holy life in the midst of ungodliness is a constant rebuke, even though there may not be a word spoken against the abounding evil. God is reincarnating Himself in His children, and wherever the image is discernible, wherever the likeness is recognizable, wherever men find God manifest in the flesh, they will nail Him to the Cross if they can. It is well to recognize this fact and be prepared for it, for it is as true to-day as ever that "if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution." This is God's plan for us, by which we may give a good testimony for Him in the midst of an evil generation, suffering wrongfully. As it is written:

"This is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again: when He suffered, threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes

ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Pet. 2: 19-25.)

"Servant of Christ, stand fast amidst the scorn
Of men who little know or love the Lord;
Turn not aside from toil; cease not to warn,
Comfort and teach. Trust Him for thy reward;
A few more moments' suffering, and then
Cometh sweet rest from all thy heart's deep pain.

"Have friends forsaken thee, and cast thy name
Out as a worthless thing? Take courage then;
Go tell thy Master; for they did the same
To Him, Who once in patience toiled for them;
Yet He was perfect in all service here;
Thou oft hast failed; this maketh Him more dear.

"Self-vindication shun. If in the right,
What gainest thou by taking from God's hand
Thy cause? If wrong, what dost thou but invite
Satan himself thy friend in need to stand?
Leave all with God. If right, He'll prove thee so;
If not, He'll pardon; therefore to Him go.

"The time is short; seek little here below;
Earth's goods would cumber thee and drag thee
down;
Let daily food suffice; care not to know
Aught of to-morrow; it may never come.
Thou canst not perish, for thy Lord is nigh,
And His own care will all thy need supply."

There is a lesson for all of us in the action of John's disciples. In the great agony of their grief, they came and took up the corpse and buried it, and went and told Jesus. What a

blessing it is that there is One to Whom the mourners of earth may go! And whither shall we go, if not to Him? He has the words of eternal life.

The Lord Jesus was doubtless filled with indignation upon hearing the report of Herod's cruel murder of the greatest of the Prophets. But though, by a word or even a thought, He could have stricken down in an instant the wicked King and his guilty companion, yet He did it not, for He came not to condemn but to save. His coming to judgment is not yet.

The All-Sufficient One

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle of Jesus recorded by all of the four Gospel writers. The fact that all of them give it a place is surely an indication of its **importance** and also of its **universality of application**. There are many lessons growing out of the wonderful story—lessons practical, spiritual, typical and dispensational. Jesus appears here as the **all-sufficient** Saviour. No need is too great for His resources, nothing is impossible with God, and He is God. He hath created the heavens and the earth by His mighty power and stretched-out arm, and nothing is too hard for Him. He is able to supply all our need. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. They all look to Him and He giveth them their food in due season.

Jesus is not only sufficient for us and our

needs, but He is able to supply the needs of others through us who are His disciples. Without Him we can do nothing. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account any thing as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3: 5.) "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having **always all** sufficiency in **everything**, may abound unto **every** good work: as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, He hath given to the poor; His righteousness abideth for ever. And He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: ye being enriched in **everything** unto **all** liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God." (2 Cor. 9: 8-11.)

God never sets us to impossible tasks, though He is constantly asking us to do things utterly beyond our own resources. We look upon the great need and are apt to say, "Send the multitudes away that they may buy themselves food." His reply is, "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat." And if we look upon our pitiable little store and say to Him, "We have here but five loaves and two fishes;" He does not rescind his orders but says, "**Bring them hither to Me.**" And when we do that—when there is the real surrender of our little all, how wonderful it is to see the poor little handful grow, and grow, and grow, until it feeds an army, and there

is more left than we began with! Oh, may we not hear His word to-day? "Bring them hither to Me."

It is only when men are hungry, and without resources to supply their own cravings, that they are ready for the food from Jesus' hands. "He commanded the multitudes to sit down." Their sitting down was a confession that they had ceased their own efforts and were waiting upon Him. Happy those who thus have ceased from their own works and are waiting only upon God.

The bread was very plainly a figure of the **Word of God**. It is written, Man liveth not by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The Word of God is precious because it reveals God unto us. And the Lord Jesus Himself is the Word of God, made flesh. He is the Bread of God and the Bread of Life in its highest form. And we must feed upon Him in order that we may be sustained and nourished in God. (Compare John 6.)

The twelve baskets full, taken up after the crowd was fully satisfied, may speak to us dispensationally. Jesus is now dealing with the multitudes—He is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. After this He will return. (Acts 15.) When He returns it will be to the Jew first, and there will be ample food for them—for every tribe a basket full. (Compare vs. 11-13 with Rom. 11:25-27.)

Awaiting the Father's Time

John tells us that thereupon the people attempted to take Jesus by force and make Him King. Now, He came for this express purpose, to be a King. But the people's hearts were all wrong, and the Father's time had not yet come. **Matthew** omits this detail as apart from His purpose here, the rejection of the Kingdom having already been fully set forth.

Walking on the Water

The marvel of the story which follows is not that **Jesus** walked on the water, but that **Peter** did. It seems perfectly natural for Jesus to rise superior to nature's law, for He is nature's God. But Peter was merely a man—"a man of like passions with us." It is unnatural—it is contrary to nature—for a man, a mere man, to walk on the surface of the sea. But he was able to do so, because Jesus had commanded it. He had said, Come, and with that word there was given the **power** to come. Peter began to sink only when he took his eyes off Christ—he was not "looking unto Jesus." But even then, he was not allowed to go down, for Jesus had given His word and He kept him from sinking. Depend upon it—His commands are always **enabling**. Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it; for no matter how impossible it may seem, you can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth you.

The whole scene of that night is a type. The sea is a figure of the nations of this world. (Dan. 7:2, 3, 17; Rev. 17:1, 15; Isa. 57:20.) The little band of disciples in the boat is the Church of God, in the world but not of it. They are safe so long as they are able to keep the sea out of the boat; so the Church is safe when separated from the world. These are the overcomers. Many are the efforts to destroy the little vessel, but the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The winds and waves are contrary. The Church is appointed to a path of persecution and world-hatred. Jesus is up in the mountain praying. He is able to save them to the uttermost that have come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25.) He will come at the dawning of the morning—at about the fourth watch of the night. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” It is always darkest just before dawn, and He is the Bright and Morning Star. In the meantime those who even now see Him by faith are enabled to walk with Him in the victorious life, triumphing over the powers of sin and darkness. They are looking unto Him and looking for Him; and suddenly He shall come and reveal Himself to them as “this same Jesus.”

And what will follow? First, there will be the joyful meeting of Jesus with His own. How glad were these weary and careworn disciples when they saw the Lord! **John** says, “They

willingly received Him into the ship." (John 6:21.) So shall we gladly greet Him in that day when He Himself shall come to us and we shall meet Him all alone, far from the view of the world—our Lord, our Saviour, our Redeemer—in the air!

But we shall not remain away. He is coming back to the earth, in glory; and when He shall appear we shall also appear with Him, in glory. First, He will manifest Himself to Israel; and then through Israel there shall flow out untold blessing to the whole wide world. It is all in the picture: "And when they had crossed over, they came to the land"—the land, mark you; and remember, every word is significant; it is the land of Israel—"unto Gennesaret"—a city of Israel. And notice what follows: "And when the men of that place knew Him, they sent into all that region round about, and brought unto Him all that were sick; and they besought Him that they might only touch the border of His garment; and as many as touched were made whole." (Vs. 34-36.)

When they "**knew Him!**" Ah, that is what this poor sick world is waiting for—just for **Israel to know Him**. When they see Him, when they look upon Him Whom they pierced, when they **know Him**, then shall they bring unto Him all that are sick. And, blessed be His holy name, He will bring it to pass! He has promised, and He is faithful to perform. "**Ye shall know** that I am Jehovah,"—this is His word to Israel—"Ye

shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O My people. And I will put My spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own Land; and ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and performed it, saith Jehovah. * * * Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two Kingdoms any more at all. * * * Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.**" (Ezekiel 37.)

"Eternal Father, hear!

Haste to fulfill Thy Word!

Let Israel's Hope appear!

Reveal to Earth her Lord!

We wait for Jesus from the skies;—

When shall His glories greet our eyes?

"How long shall Death yet reign,
And Hell our race oppress?
When shall Earth bloom again
In Eden's blessedness?
We wait for Jesus from the skies;—
When shall His glories greet our eyes?

"The waves of ill are high;
The World with trouble reels;
All lands and creatures cry;—
Speed Judgment's chariot-wheels!
We wait for Jesus from the skies;—
When shall His glories greet our eyes?

"The times are prophets now;
They preach impending doom.
Let each, repentant, bow,
And saints prepare for home!
We wait for Jesus from the skies;—
Soon shall His glories greet our eyes.

"Hail to the dawning day,
By holy seers foretold!
Hail to Messiah's sway,
And coming Age of Gold!
We wait for Jesus from the skies;—
Soon shall His glories greet our eyes."

THE WORD IN THE KINGDOM

Chapter 15

The supreme authority of the Word of God is the question brought before us in the opening paragraph of the fifteenth chapter of **Matthew**. The Jewish leaders had placed numerous rabbinical rules and regulations alongside the Word of God, as having equal authority with the Scriptures; and indeed wherever there was conflict, the human traditions were counted as having higher authority than the divine revelations. The issue is sharply drawn in the opening verses of our chapter:

"Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and Scribes, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. And He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress **the commandment of God** because of your tradition? For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and he that speaketh evil of father or mother, let them die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the Word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth Me with their lips;

but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Vs. 1-9.)

That the Lord Jesus attached great importance to this matter is shown by the public manner in which He proceeded: "And He called to Him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man." (Vs. 10, 11.)

The End of the Law

Here, then, is an end to all the Law, for it had done its work as a ministration of condemnation and death, and the ministration of justification and life was soon to be brought to light in the Gospel. (Compare 2 Cor. 3.) Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth; and His word to His disciples now is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the Law but under grace." (Rom. 6:14.) Under the Levitical code certain foods were counted clean and certain others unclean, but by the pronouncement in our chapter, Jesus swept away all such distinctions. As **Mark** records it, Jesus said to His disciples, "Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught? **This He said, making all meats clean.**" (Mark 7:19.)

Therefore, there is now nothing unclean, of itself; but "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified through the Word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4:5.)

Now all this was exceeding bitter to the Jewish teachers. They had long since lost all heart for the Word of the Living God, for it only searched and judged them; and all they had left were the traditions of the Elders, which called for outward morality alone, and exalted formal religiousness in the place of real obedience unto God. Therefore these Pharisees turned away their ears from the truth. "Then came the disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But He answered and said, Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Vs. 12-14.)

Defilement from Within

This disposed of the hypocritical Pharisees—but, alas for the blindness of the human heart, even His disciples were far from entering into His thought. Peter—always the spokesman who blurts out what his brother disciples are thinking but dare not say—"Peter answered and said unto Him, Declare unto us the parable."

The Lord Jesus in His reply was not encouraging personal untidiness among His disciples.

The point is not that these men's hands were actually dirty, but rather that they had failed to go through the interminable round of washings that were required by the Rabbis. We have seen how very tedious was the process of leading even the disciples themselves into the truth. They had, all their lives long, been taught that religion was largely a matter of outward form. Certain feasts must be attended, certain fasts must be observed, certain offerings must be given, certain garments must be worn, certain prayers must be said—this was the only religion they had ever known. To unlearn all this was difficult. Jesus Himself seemed at times to despair, saying, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." But Jesus could sow the seed in their hearts and wait for the Holy Spirit to bring it to fruition; and this was His plan. For He said: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." (John 16:12-15.)

The Canaanitish Woman

Turning now, with a sore and burdened heart,

from His disobedient and gainsaying people—His kinsmen according to the flesh—the Lord Jesus does a strange thing. We must follow Him closely, for since His final break with Israel's blind guides in chapter 12, He has been teaching by means of typical and dispensational parables and miracles. In verses 21-28 the Church is set forth in a figure. A Canaanitish woman is richly blessed with more than she asks or thinks, and by her example teaches a great lesson of humble faith. It will not be forgotten that this woman was a Gentile, and not only a Gentile, but a **Canaanite**, a representative of that race which was under God's peculiar curse. "Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites"—this was the word to Israel upon their entering the land of Canaan; and the promise of Zechariah 14:21, looking forward to the restored land and restored Temple worship, says, "In that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of Hosts." But grace is without any limit and overleaps all obstacles. Through Israel's failure, this despised outcast receives the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich.

It is at first a most astonishing thing to see the Lord Jesus refusing to respond to this woman's cry of need. It is so unlike Him, Whose ears are always open to the slightest call upon His name. But He cannot answer her. She is calling upon Him as the **Son of David**; and so He is, but as such—as **Son of David**—He has nothing to do with a **Canaanite**.

His disciples did not understand His refusal; they were annoyed by this persistent woman. And they "came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Let us notice how faithfully and how surely this divine Teacher was leading the poor woman into the place of blessing; how His heart went out to her, and how He longed to bless her. He might have healed her daughter instantly, as indeed He finally did, but all this was happening for an "ensample" and was to be written for our admonition (1 Cor. 10:11) and there must be no mistake; the way of approach must be made perfectly clear.

"But she came and worshipped Him saying, **Lord, help me.** And He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour." (Vs. 25-28.)

She had now dropped the Jewish title, "Son of David"—this was His name as Israel's King. "**Lord, help me!**" was her cry, and it is not in His heart to resist that call. The Bread of Life belonged first to the children of the household, that is, to the Jews. If it has come to the Gen-

tiles, it is still true that "salvation is of the Jews," and it is still for the Jews—"to the Jew first." What we have received is just that which was first offered to the children and rejected by them, and it has fallen to us from the Master's table. And even these crumbs are for those only who are willing to stoop down to take them—for those only who are ready to humble themselves and take the place of the dogs, deserving **nothing**, earning **nothing**, meriting **nothing**.

Do you think this picture is overdrawn? If so, let me ask you to look at the picture drawn by the Holy Spirit of Truth, through the Apostle to the Gentiles, in the Epistle to the **Romans**—chapter II, verses 11 to 27. God has wrought contrary to nature in saving us who were Gentiles. He will yet have mercy on Israel and save them:

"I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid: but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? But I speak to you that are (of the) Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an Apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry: if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them. For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and

if the root is holy so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved; even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is My cove-

nant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

He Will Return

Israel's King will not, therefore, for ever remain away from His own people. He will come to them as the Deliverer to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is shown very beautifully in the following verse, the 29th: "And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the Sea of Galilee; and He went up into the mountain, and sat there."

To the disciple who has a heart for "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," this morsel is very precious. It foretells the King's return to the land of Israel and His enthronement as King in Mount Zion: "He went up into **the** mountain"—not merely "a mountain," as in the King James version—"He went up into **the** mountain and sat there." It is the Second Psalm over again—"Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." (Ps. 2:6.) But His coming will be to Israel not only. He will come "nigh unto the sea," ever a type of the Gentile nations. Through Israel the whole world will be richly blessed. See what follows: "And there came unto Him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at His feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitudes wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walk-

ing, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel." (Vs. 30, 31.)

In the day when Israel shall be reclaimed and restored to the land, with the Lord Jesus reigning as Priest on His throne, the blessing will overflow throughout the whole wide world—and then shall the multitudes glorify the God of Israel. **Isaiah** saw it all and foretold it in the second chapter of his Prophecy, saying:

"It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountains of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah." (Isa. 2: 2-5.)

All this is typically set forth in the story which follows. (Vs. 32-39.) In our study of the feeding of the five thousand, we learned that the multitude there typified the "fullness of the Gentiles," in connection with this present Church

Dispensation. In the twelve baskets taken up afterwards we saw that after the Lord has finished the work of visiting the Gentiles and has gathered out the people for His name, there will be ample supply of the Bread of Life for the tribes of Israel—a full basket for each tribe. In the feeding of the four thousand, the other side of the picture is presented; and it is shown that after Israel, the earthly people—and four is the earth number—after Israel is filled, the supply of the Living Bread will still be unexhausted and inexhaustible. The number seven stands for completeness, and the seven baskets full signify the all-sufficient supply for the nations—so that through Israel the whole earth shall be filled, as the waters cover the sea. Their fall is the riches of the world; their loss is the riches of the Gentiles—how much more their fullness!

It is significant that the baskets employed in these two miracles were not the same. In the feeding of the five thousand, when twelve baskets were filled with the remaining fragments, the basket was the “*kophinos*,” a small hand-basket, peculiar to the Jews; while in the feeding of the four thousand, the basket was the “*spuris*,” a much larger basket or hamper, used more generally by the other nations.

It is also noteworthy that the Lord Jesus remarked on the number of days during which the people had gone without food, “I have com-

passion on the multitude," He said, "because they continue with Me now three days and have nothing to eat." (V. 32.) In chapter 12:40 He had predicted His own resurrection after three days in the heart of the earth; and in that resurrection, though they should not discern it, there would be untold blessing for them. Doubtless also He had in mind these present days, when Israel, though in the very presence of the true Bread which came down from heaven for them, are still without food, for they will not have the Bread of God—they continue with Him now three days and have nothing to eat. But He has compassion upon them and He will yet spread a table for them in the wilderness. And then shall Israel say, as it is written, "Come and let us return unto Jehovah; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him. And let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah: His going forth is sure as the morning; and He will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth." (Hos. 6: 1-3.)

The chapter closes with our Lord finding rest in the boat, which, as we learned from the fourteenth chapter, is a type of the Church. For in the day of His glory the Church will be manifested with Him in glory. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4: 17.)

"What is our sweetest joy—
Beloved companion, say?
What our delightful, best employ,
Untiring, free from all alloy,
In this dark, cloudy day?
To speak together of our home,
Looking for Him Who soon will come.

"Where do our spirits find
Refreshment and repose?
When, heart to heart, and mind to mind
We search those records God designed
To medicine our woes;
And feel, as bright their pages shine,
Each line was traced by Love divine.

"We look on all around
As soon to disappear.
We listen to the tempest's sound
As wildly now it sweeps around,
Without an anxious fear.
We hear a voice amidst its swell,
Which whispers, 'All will soon be well.'

"Yes, soon the Lord will come;
Then will all trouble cease.
Earth's kingdoms will His own become;
Proud Antichrist will meet his doom;
All will be joy and peace.
These very storms prepare His way,
And usher in that glorious day."

THE PERSON OF THE KING

Chapter 16

For many reasons the sixteenth chapter of our Gospel is especially important. In this chapter for the first time in the New Testament, and of course for the first time in all the Scriptures, **the Church of God** is mentioned by name, though as something yet future. Here is found that celebrated conversation between the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Peter, which has constituted for centuries the battleground of controversialists among the sects, and to this day marks a sharp line of cleavage between the Romanist and the Protestant. Here also do we see the Lord Jesus beginning to foretell His death and resurrection.

We do well to tread softly as we enter upon the consideration of such a passage of Scripture. The adorable Son of God is girding Himself for the battle. His people hate Him, but He loves them with a perfect love. They will not have Him, but He cannot give them up. He will die for them, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God. He must sanctify them by His own blood, suffering without the gate. May God Himself help us to enter somewhat with Him into His passion! Let us be much in prayer that we may know the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed unto His

death. Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Thanks be to God, His death is not in vain. His people, who rejected Him in the Day of His humiliation, shall be willing in the Day of His power. (Ps. 110.) Then shall they see Him Whom they pierced and hail Him as their long-looked-for Messiah. "Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense is before Him. And they shall be called, The Holy People, The Redeemed of Jehovah: and thou (i. e., Jerusalem) shalt be called, Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken." (Isa. 62: 11, 12.)

Then shall Israel ask, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength?"

And He shall answer, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

And then shall come the question, "Wherefore art thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?"

And He shall reply, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with Me; yea, I will tread them in Mine anger and trample them in My wrath: and their lifeblood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the Day of Vengeance is in My heart, and My Year of Re-

demption is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My wrath, it upheld me. And I will tread down the peoples in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My wrath, and I will pour out their lifeblood on the earth." (Isa. 63: 1-6.)

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in His train?"

Our chapter opens with a hypocritical request from the Pharisees and Sadducees, who came, trying Him, and asking Him to show them a sign from heaven. These were the formal religionists of the day. The Pharisees, with their smug self-satisfaction, were outwardly very devout and extraordinarily punctilious in the fulfilment of every jot and tittle of religious ceremony. **At heart** they were far from God and filled with selfishness and corruption. The Sadducees were the materialists, denying the resurrection and everything spiritual. They were moralists, priding themselves upon their righteousness and integrity. All this was mere outward show, for **inwardly** they too were full of sin and uncleanness. These were the two classes which made up in large part Israel's religious leaders. Blind leaders of the blind they were, despite their fair professions, just the offspring of vipers, the brood of Satan. Whited sepul-

chers, indeed, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness!

The Lord Jesus disposed of their request with a word. "Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven," said He; "but ye cannot discern the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of Jonah. (Compare Ch. 12:39, 40.) And He left them and departed." (Vs. 3, 4.)

He then warns His disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, meaning their teaching. (Vs. 5-12.) This was considered in connection with our study of the parable of the leaven in chapter 13.

"Who Say Ye that I Am?"

Upon reaching the region of Cæsarea Philippi, the Lord Jesus asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of Man is? And they said, Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or One of the Prophets. He made no comment on this, for He was leading up to the most important question that can be asked of men—"But who say ye that I am?" (Vs. 13-15.)

Nothing is so important as this—"What think ye of Jesus?" Everything depends upon the answer to that question—everything, for time and for eternity. Your personal relation to the personal Jesus will determine your destiny throughout the endless Ages—"Who say ye that I am?"

And Simon Peter answered and said, **"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."**

It is written that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. (Lu. 15:10.) It is the Lord Jesus Himself Who thus rejoices in the presence of the angels. It is thus that He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. Whenever a soul is born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, that is joy for the Saviour of men. This was the joy which was set before Him and for which He endured the Cross, despising the shame. What, then, think you, must have been the joy of that great loving heart, when this confession burst from Simon Peter's lips? This was the very first soul to come to saving knowledge of the truth under the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus. If this fact be borne carefully in mind, it will greatly assist us in the understanding of that which follows:

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Who is in heaven." (V. 17.)

In the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, our Lord Jesus said to His enemies, "Ye have seen Me, and yet believe not. All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." When the Jews murmured concerning Him because He said, "I am the Bread Which came down out of heaven," His reply was, "Murmur not among

yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father Which sent Me draw him." This teaching stumbled many even of His disciples; that is, of those persons who were following Him about and hearing His teachings. They were called disciples, for they were followers and learners. They had no heart for God, though they delighted in the spectacular display of divine power in such miracles as the feeding of multitudes with a handful of bread and fishes. They sought Him because they ate of the loaves and were filled. When, therefore, He turned upon them as in the sixth of **John**, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken to you are spirit, and are life. But there are some of you that believe not. * * * * For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it be given unto him of the Father." Upon this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Jesus said therefore unto the Twelve, "Would ye also go away?" and it was Simon Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that **Thou art the Holy One of God.**"

It is written in 1 John 5:1 that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

This belief—when it is real heart-belief, real trust—is the only and all-sufficient means of salvation; by this, man lays hold on eternal life. The Lord Jesus has been waiting upon His Father; and here at length there is a man born again by the Word of the Living God. For there can be no doubt that precisely at this point in the sixteenth chapter of **Matthew** we have the regeneration of Simon Peter—his passing from death into life. It is the believing heart of the new-born soul that speaks in the great confession—“**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.**” Jesus recognizes the confession as real, for he at once ascribes the work of grace, evidenced by it, to His Father in heaven.

It is truly deplorable that the simple words of the Lord Jesus in the verses that follow should have been so obscured and confused by the fog of controversy. May God Himself assist us as we seek to study these words, that we may approach them in simplicity and with the desire only to know what our Lord meant to express through them!

“And I also say unto thee, that thou art **Peter**, and upon this **rock** I will build My **Church**; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the **Kingdom of Heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Vs. 18, 19.)

"Upon This Rock"

The storm of conflict raging about this passage largely turns upon the question as to what our Lord Jesus meant to signify by the word **"rock."** Peter is the English equivalent for the Greek word, **"petros,"** meaning a stone; while **"rock"** is **"petra"** in the Greek. In the original text this distinction is made—"Thou art **Petros** and upon this **petra** I will build My Church."

The whole fabric of the papacy rests upon the Roman interpretation of this passage, by which it is claimed—

First—That the rock was **Peter himself.** The Romanist commentators point out that our Lord spoke not Greek but **Syriac** or **Aramaic**, and that in the language employed by Him there is but one word for a stone and a rock; namely, **"cepha."** Thus the declaration would read, "Thou are **Cepha**, and upon this **cepha** I will build My Church." They also claim

Second—That the fact that Peter is the rock upon which the Church is built, together with the further fact that to Peter were delivered the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—that these facts establish the **primacy of Peter** among the Apostles. And the still further claim is made

Third—That the primacy of Peter has descended to his successors in office as Bishop of Rome. In short, that **Peter was the first Pope** and that all the Popes are fully authorized as his suc-

cessors by the declaration of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 16.

Among the Protestant commentators there is no intelligible consensus of opinion. By some it is claimed that by the expression "this rock" is meant **Christ Himself**. It is suggested that perhaps the Lord Jesus, while speaking, laid His hand on His own breast, as when He said "Destroy this temple," meaning the temple of His body. (John 2:19.)

Others, by "this rock" understand **Peter's confession of faith**. By these it is pointed out that Peter's confession—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"—is the great truth upon which the Church rests; and that Christ had this in mind when he spoke to Peter, as if He had said, "This is that great truth upon which I will build My Church."

It is also claimed, among the Protestant writers pretty generally, that the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power to bind and loose, were delivered not only to Peter, but also to the other Apostles, and to the whole body of the Church. And in proof of this contention reference is made to the passage in **John** (Ch. 20:22, 23), where the risen Lord breathed upon the assembled disciples and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." There is no question but that in the passage in **John** and also in a similar passage in **Matthew** (Ch.

18:18), the authority conferred was upon the whole Church. But just how that has anything to do with the interpretation of the 16th of **Matthew** is not apparent.

Without assuming any knowledge beyond that of our brethren, and without any desire to be wise above what is written, let us seek to discover, as the Spirit of Truth may be pleased to guide us, whatever God has revealed in the Scriptures, bearing upon the interpretation of our chapter. Surely, it cannot be possible that God has left such important questions obscure and incapable of solution as are presented to us here. Remembering, then, that these things of the Spirit cannot be searched out by the natural man, and relying upon our divine Guide to lead us into the truth, let us examine the testimony of the Word of God as to the portion of Scripture before us.

The Church's One Foundation

First—We are not for a moment left in doubt as to the foundation of the Church. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, **which is Jesus Christ.**" (1 Cor. 3:11.) This is He of Whom it is written in Isa. 28:16, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a **Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone of sure foundation.**" It was this same Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, who, speaking of His ascended Lord, in Acts 4:11, 12, said, "He is the Stone, Which was set at nought of you the

builders, which was made the **Head of the Corner**. And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." And it was Peter again, who is his First Epistle, referring to the passage from **Isaiah**, quoted above, wrote of the Lord Jesus, "Unto Whom coming, a living **Stone**, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a **chief Cornerstone**, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame. For unto you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve, the **Stone** which the builders rejected, the same was made the **Head of the Corner**; and, a **Stone** of stumbling, and a **Rock** of offence." (1 Pet. 2:4-8.) The rock is used as a symbol of Christ many times in the Scriptures, as, for example, in 1 Cor. 10:4, and doubtless also in Matt. 7:24, 25 and Lu. 6:48. We may, therefore, count it settled that

"The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord.
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From Heaven He came and sought her,
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died."

Second—Nor is there any slightest question as to the **Head** of the Church. God hath raised His Son from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this Age, but also in that which is to come; and He hath put all things in subjection under His feet, and given Him to be **Head over all things to the Church**, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:20-23.) The Spirit of God declares unto us, in Eph. 4:8-16, that the whole purpose of gifts in the Church is that we may grow up in all things into Him, Who is the **Head**, even Christ; from Whom all the body fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love? That Christ is the Head of the Church is repeated in Eph. 5:23 and Col. 1:18, while in Col. 2:18, 19 we are warned against those teachers who fail to give Him that place.

Third—And yet, in spite of all that we have so far discovered, it still seems to be only fair and honest to conclude that when Jesus said, "Thou art a **stone** and upon this **rock** I will build My Church," He meant us to understand that by the **rock**, as well as the **stone**, He meant **Peter himself**. Any other conclusion makes our Lord's words, "Thou art **Peter**," to mean noth-

ing and to have no connection with what follows.

Indeed, it seems very clear that if we had our Lord's words in the language in which He spoke them, we should find no difference between the word translated **Peter** and the word rendered **rock**. This at least is the view maintained by many of the private translators of the New Testament. Dr. Young's Bible Translation makes the disputed passage read, "Thou art a **rock**, and upon this **rock** I will build My Assembly."

Wakefield reads it, "Thou art truly named **Peter**, and upon this very **stone** I will build My Church."

George Campbell renders it, "Thou art named **Rock**, and on the **rock** I will build My Church."

Taylor's New Testament has the word "Rock" in brackets, reading thus, "Thou art **Peter** [Rock], and upon this **rock** I will build My Church."

The Emphatic Diaglott reads, "Thou art a **Rock**, and on this **rock** I will build My Church."

Samuel Sharpe also employs the brackets, reading, "Thou art **Peter** [or a **rock**], and on this **rock** I will build My Church."

Andrews Norton shares the same view, for his translation reads, "You are, as I have named you, a **Rock**, and on this **rock** I will build My Church."

Charles Thomson is very emphatic, rendering these words, "Thou art named **Peter** (a **rock**),

and upon **this very rock** I will build My Church."

And the Twentieth Century New Testament reading is, "Your name is '**Peter**'—a **Rock**, and on **this rock** I will build My Church."

And this conclusion does not at all affect the former one that Christ is the Foundation of the Church. In Ephesians 2:20, the Church is represented as being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, **Christ Jesus Himself being the chief Cornerstone**. In the description of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in Rev. 21, it is written that the city wall has twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Now Peter was the first of the Apostles of the Lamb who was gathered as a living **stone** unto Christ the great Living **Stone**. The building began, after Christ Himself, with Peter. He was the first **stone** to be laid upon the great underlying **Foundation**, which is Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus could say to Peter, as He did say, "Upon **this rock** I will build My Church."

Even to this day, whenever an important building is to be erected, the first thing to be done, after the foundation is completed, is to lay what we call the cornerstone. This is not the kind of cornerstone the New Testament uses as a figure of Christ, for the cornerstone in that case supports the whole building. But the importance attached to the modern cornerstone consists in the fact that it is the **first** stone to be laid after

the substructure is completed. Otherwise, it is no more important than the stones at the other corners, but because it is the very **first** stone in the superstructure, we lay it with public ceremonies and give it a place of honor. In a sense, the whole building is built upon it, for the building begins with it. Now this is what Peter is in the Church. He is not and he never was a **Pope**. There is not a scrap of evidence that he was ever Bishop of Rome. He is a brother in a common brotherhood, though he was the first to enter that brotherhood. The Romanist premise does not lead to the Romanist conclusion.

Peter himself, by the Holy Spirit, has once and for ever disposed of all the pretensions of the Papal hierarchy, falsely made in his name. Hear him as he speaks in 1 Pet. 5: 1-4:

"The Elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-Elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you**, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Fourth—As to Peter's successors, he has none. There is not the slightest ground here for the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. Christ has no

Vicegerent on the earth and needs none, for He Himself is present with His Church—He never leaves her nor forsakes her. As for the Priesthood in the Church, there can be no separate order of Priests, for the Church is a royal Priesthood; every believer is a Priest having full access into the Holy of Holies, where God dwells. (See Heb. 10:19-25.)

Dean Alford, in his "Greek Testament for English Readers," says: "The name **Peter** (not now first given, but prophetically bestowed by our Lord on His first interview with Simon, John 1:43) or **Cephas**, signifying a rock, the termination being only altered from Petra to Petros to suit the masculine appellation, denotes the **personal position of this Apostle in the building of the Church of Christ**. He was the first of those **foundation stones** (Rev. 21:14) on which the living Temple of God was built: this building itself beginning on the day of Pentecost by the laying of **three thousand living stones** on this very foundation. That this is the simple and only interpretation of the words of our Lord, the whole usage of the New Testament shows: in which not only mere confessions, but **men**, are uniformly the pillars or stones of the spiritual building. See 1 Pet. 2:4-6; 1 Tim. 3:15 (where the pillar is not Timothy, but the congregation of the faithful) and note: Gal. 2:9; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 3:12. And it is on Peter, as by divine revelation making this confession, as thus under the influence of the

Holy Ghost, as standing out before the Apostles in the strength of this faith, as himself founded on the one foundation, **Jesus Christ**, 1 Cor. 3: 11—that the Jewish portion of the Church was built, Acts 2 to 5, and the Gentile, Acts 10 and 11. After the last event, we hear little of him, but during this, the first building time, he is never lost sight of: see especially Acts 1: 15; 2: 14, 37; 3: 12; 4: 8; 5: 15, 29; 9: 34, 40; 10: 25, 26. We may certainly exclaim with Bengel, ‘**All this may be said with safety; for what has this to do with Rome?**’ Nothing can be further from any legitimate interpretation of this promise than the idea of a perpetual primacy in the successors of Peter; the very notion of **succession** is precluded by the form of the comparison, which concerns the person, and **him only**, so far as it involves a **direct** promise. In its other and general sense, as applying to all those living stones (Peter’s own expression for members of Christ’s Church) of whom the Church should be built, it implies, as Origen excellently comments on it, saying, that all this must be understood as said not only to Peter, as in the letter of the Gospel, but to every one who is such as Peter here shewed himself, as the spirit of the Gospel teaches us. The application of the promise to St. Peter has been elaborately impugned by Dr. Wordsworth. His zeal to appropriate the rock to Christ has somewhat overshot itself. In arguing that the term can apply to none but God, he will find it difficult

surely to deny all reference to a rock in the name Peter. To me, it is equally difficult, nay impossible to deny all reference in 'upon this rock,' to the preceding word **Peter**. Let us keep to the plain straightforward sense of Scripture, however that sense may have been misused by Rome." (Vol. I, part I, page 119.)

Keys of the Kingdom

Fifth—The act of Christ in delivering the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven into Peter's hands, with authority to bind or loose, will become equally clear if we are careful to search for its meaning only in the Scriptures themselves. It is only when we turn aside from this well of living water to the hewn cisterns of human teaching and tradition, that we are brought to confusion. The Lord Jesus was about to leave the earth, so far as His bodily presence was concerned, and He was to be absent for a long time. It was needful that the King, before His departure, should make it known who could enter the Kingdom and upon what conditions. The New Testament had not yet been written. He here selects Peter, His first convert, to speak for Him in this regard. It is plain that only Peter is meant, for the pronouns employed are not plural but singular.

Now if we carefully trace Peter's movements after His Lord's departure, we shall find that it is he and he alone who opened the doors of the

Kingdom of Heaven. There were **three** of these keys received by Peter from the Lord Jesus' hands. The **first** was used on that great Day of Pentecost, when Peter was the spokesman and when he opened the doors of the Kingdom to the people of Israel. "The promise is unto you," said he, "and unto your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39.) To be sure, the other disciples also preached on that day, but Peter had to be present and approving. He was the chief spokesman.

Again, after the persecution that arose in connection with the death of Stephen, Philip went to Samaria, and preached to the Samaritans. But, though many believed the Word, the Holy Spirit fell on none of them. "Now when the Apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them **Peter** and John who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet it was fallen upon none of them; only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Ac. 8:14-27.) This was Peter's **second** key. He had now opened the doors of the Kingdom to the **Jews** and the **Samaritans**.

The **third** and last key was used in Acts 10, to open these doors to the great **Gentile** world. Cornelius, the Roman centurion, was commanded

by an angel of God to send to Joppa for **Peter**, and Peter, by the vision of the great sheet, was shown that even the unclean Gentiles were no longer unclean, for God had cleansed them. Peter went to Cornelius' house and preached the Gospel to those assembled there. Peter was not the Apostle to the Gentiles; that was Paul's office, and Paul was converted in the preceding chapter. But Peter, the Apostle to the Circumcision, must be the first to take the Gospel to the Uncircumcision, for Peter had the keys. In each of these three instances, God showed by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon the hearers, that what Peter was doing upon the earth was ratified in heaven. Never again was there any use for keys to the Kingdom, for the doors were wide open, so that all who would might come. In the case of the Ephesians, who had only received John's baptism (Acts 19) Peter's presence was not needed, for he had already opened the Kingdom to all Gentiles.

In the concluding paragraph of our chapter, Peter shows that though he might be called a Pope, he was at least not an infallible one. It is a humbling instance of how prone the human heart is to yield itself to the enemy. Satan is ever alert at the times of spiritual exaltation and exultation among the Lord's people—ever seeking to thrust us down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Our Lord reminds His disciples that even for the saints, the final reward will be according to their deeds. (V. 27.) Then in the

last verse He points them on to the coming of the Kingdom as it is about to be pictured on the Mount of Transfiguration. This will come before us in our study of the next chapter.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

Chapter 17

In the seventeenth chapter we have a description of the **Transfiguration** of the Lord Jesus. The event is a prophecy, in the form of a picture—a pictorial preview—of the **Son of Man coming in His Kingdom**. This appears if we read the words of the Lord Jesus in the final verse of chapter 16, together with the opening paragraph of chapter 17.

“Verily, I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. And after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart; and He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him, and Peter answered and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good to be here: if Thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles: one for **Thee**, and one for **Moses**, and one for **Elijah**. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; **hear ye Him**. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and

were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save **Jesus only.**" (Ch. 16:28-17:8.)

And not only in **Matthew**, but also in **Mark** and **Luke**, the account of the Transfiguration scene is found immediately preceded by these words of Jesus, as if to prepare the disciples for what they were about to see, and to show them the significance of it. In **Mark** it reads: "Verily I say unto you, There are some here of them that stand by who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power." Then follows the Transfiguration story. In **Luke**, Jesus is quoted as saying, "I tell you of a truth, There are some that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God." And this is followed again by the account of the scene in the Mount.

In one of Peter's Epistles we have the Holy Spirit's own explanation of the Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus. In the first chapter of his second letter, Peter is urging upon his readers the importance of diligence to make their calling and election sure. "For if ye do these things," he writes, "ye shall never stumble, for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and are established in the truth which is with you. And I think it right, as long

as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the **power and coming our Lord Jesus Christ**, but we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. And this voice we ourselves heard, borne out of heaven, **when we were with Him in the holy mount**. And we have the Word of Prophecy, more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a lamp shining in a squalid place, until the Day dawn and the Day star arise." (2 Pet. 1: 10-19.)

Through Peter, therefore, we learn that we are to look upon the picture before us as an illustration, showing forth in a type "**the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom**." This makes all perfectly clear; and with this key in our hand we shall find everything opening before us. As we look upon this scene, let us realize that we are examining a photograph, a miniature, of the coming Kingdom. In the sixteenth chapter the sufferings of the Christ are foretold: in the seventeenth we are brought face to face with the

glories that shall follow them. (See 1 Pet. 1: 11.) The **Rapture of the Church** is, of course, not in view here. It is that indeed for which we wait and for which we are longing. But the Rapture of the Church is a part of Paul's Gospel, and was never made known to the Apostles before his day. What we are to see in this chapter in **Matthew** is the **Kingdom**, as it shall be set up on the earth, after the Son of Man has returned in the clouds with power and great glory. All the elements of the Kingdom are discernible in the story of the Transfiguration:

First—Jesus Himself is the centre of the picture. When Peter suggested three tents—one each for Jesus and Moses and Elijah, as if to put them all on a common level—Moses and Elijah immediately disappeared. They represented the Law and the Prophets, all testifying of Jesus, the center of everything. Christ is the end of the Law, and the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy. So in the coming Kingdom, the Son of Man will be Lord of all. What a blessed thought: that this same Jesus, Who was rejected and scourged, and spat upon, will then be owned, and adored, and worshipped. He was humiliated; He will be exalted. He was crucified; He will be glorified. He Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession, will in that day be manifested as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.”

Second—Moses, in this portrait of the com-

ing Kingdom, represents those who have a part in the **First Resurrection**. When our Lord Jesus shall come, all who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. 4: 14-16.) "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. 15: 22, 23.) "This is the **First Resurrection**: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the **First Resurrection**: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20: 5, 6.) That Moses was actually and bodily present on the Holy Mount is indicated in **Jude 9**, where Michael the Archangel is said to have contended with the devil about the body of Moses. Doubtless the body of Moses was raised from the dead in order to appear in the scene before us. Thus Moses, who was once denied entrance to the Promised Land, is seen in the land, having reached it by the heavenly route. He stands not now on Mount Pisgah, viewing the land from afar, but on the Mount of Glory in the very midst of the land itself. He who had looked across the centuries, and seen by faith the coming Deliverer, and counted the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, is now realizing

something of the recompense of reward. For more than a millennium this Moses has been in the heavenly courts, holding sweet communion with his Lord, and it is no strange thing for him now to stand with Him in the mount and talk with Him. Moses' body had been sleeping in the dust of Mount Nebo ever since the day God called him hence, but his soul and spirit, being "absent from the body," had all this time been "present with the Lord." Moses therefore was **literally** and **bodily** and **visibly** present in the holy mount, and so all the saints who sleep in Jesus will be literally present when the glory is revealed; when He shall appear, then shall they also appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:4.) Moses is a perfect type of the believer who is called upon to pass through the gates of death. When his Lord called him, he went up with Him into the mountain and died there according to the Word of Jehovah; and He buried him in the valley. For him death had lost its sting and its victory, for he had seen the promises afar off and embraced them. He just fell asleep in Jesus—asleep in the everlasting arms.

"Asleep in Jesus—blessed sleep!
 From which none ever wakes to weep.
 A calm and undisturbed repose,
 Unbroken by the last of foes.

"Asleep in Jesus—O how sweet
 To be for such a slumber meet!
 With holy confidence to sing,
 That death hath lost its venom'd sting."

Third—To sleep in Jesus is indeed blessed, but there is something even better. **Elijah**, who went up to heaven without death, represents, in this dispensational picture, that company of living believers who shall not die, but who shall be changed in a moment and caught up to meet the Lord. "Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. 15:51, 52.) It was while discussing the Resurrection at the last day that Jesus said to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." (John 11:25, 26.) When the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven and raise from the dead all who sleep in Him, then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4:17.) This is the **blessed hope** of Titus 2:13; it is the **purifying hope** of 1 John 3:3; it is the **hope set before us** in Heb. 6:18-20, the hope "which we have as an anchor of the soul, a **hope both sure and stedfast** and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a Forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." To sleep in Jesus is indeed blessed; it is precious to know

that He leadeth even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; but—

“Oh, joy! Oh, delight! Should we go without dying!
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying!
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into
glory,
When Jesus receives His own!”

Fourth—Yet another class is represented in the Transfiguration. When at the end of The Great Tribulation, the Lord Jesus shall come to the earth as Son of Man, to judge the world and reign as the blessed and only Potentate, His people **Israel** will be converted and gathered unto Him at Mount Zion. This is set forth in the presence of the three Apostles, **Peter** and **James** and **John**. These were not glorified in the picture, for they represent the Jews who will pass into the Kingdom as an earthly people.

Peter's request that three tabernacles be built is a part of the type; for according to **Zechariah**, the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom will be followed by a revival of the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zech. 14:16-21.)

The multitude at the foot of the mountain may also be included in the type, representing the Gentile nations, to whom the blessing is to come through Israel in that glad time.

The Coming of Elijah

On the way down the mountain side, Jesus commanded that the vision be kept secret until

after His resurrection. It was a spiritual seed, to bring forth fruit in due time. In reply to a question about Elijah's coming before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, He replied that Elijah must indeed come and restore all things; but if Israel had received John Baptist, he would have been Elijah unto them, for he had come in the spirit and power of Elijah. (Vs. 9-13.)

Satan's Power Broken

The healing of the demon-possessed epileptic—bound by Satan—at the foot of the mountain, is a reminder of the universal healing which will follow the coming of the Son of Man and the restoration of His scattered people. "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." When the Deliverer shall come forth out of Zion faith will have almost perished from the earth—even His disciples being powerless, "because of their little faith." (Vs. 14-21. Compare Luke 18:8.)

By Way of the Cross

The glory must be preceded by the sufferings of the Christ. The way to the throne was the Way of the Cross. Therefore, "While they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised up." And the disciples, who could not see the end from the beginning, were greatly distressed. They had not yet the eye of

faith by which to see the joy that was set before Him; therefore "they were exceeding sorry." (Vs. 22, 23.)

"For Me and Thee"

The chapter closes with a beautiful story concerning the half-shekel for the Temple tax. The collectors came to Peter asking, "Doth not your Teacher pay the half-shekel?" Peter, knowing that his Teacher was the Lord of the Temple, and yet remembering that Teacher's previous custom, answered, "Yea." Then, returning to the house, he finds that his Lord already knows all about it. He needed not to be told. "Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the Kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free." He needed not to pay a tax for the support of the Temple, for the Temple was His Father's house. And Peter, too, now that he had been born again, was a son of that same Father, and therefore Jesus counted him with Himself, saying, "The sons are free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel; that take, and give unto them, for **Me and thee.**" (Vs. 24-27.)

"For Me and thee!" What gracious words

are these—"for Me and thee!" The Lord of Life and Glory, the God of Heaven and Earth, comes down from His glorious dwelling on high and becomes a poor Jew—and then, having brought another poor Jew to a saving knowledge of Himself, he begins to bear his burdens, even performing a marvelous miracle to pay the Temple tax—"for Me and thee!"

Is it any wonder that Peter afterward wrote exhorting us to cast all our care on Him for He careth for us? (1 Peter 5:7.) Only trust Him and He will supply your need according to His glorious riches. "In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM

Chapter 18

The grace of God often seems to be wasted. It is like falling suddenly from heaven to earth, to come from the closing words of the seventeenth chapter of **Matthew** to the opening words of the eighteenth. In the former passage the Lord Jesus has shown us something of the beautiful identification of Himself with His disciples; and as we turn to the latter passage, we find the disciples occupied with things purely, utterly selfish.

In the seventeenth chapter the Lord Jesus led three of His followers up into a mountain, and there they beheld His glory, as He was manifested in the picture of the coming Kingdom. On His way down the mountain He said to them, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." But before going up the mountain He had been heard to say, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they shall see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." Therefore the thoughts of the disciples were occupied with the Kingdom. And if there was to be a Kingdom, then, they reasoned, there ought to be good positions in that Kingdom for them. It is characteristic of the natural mind to think only of itself and its own selfish ends.

It is gratifying to notice that Peter, ordinarily the spokesman of the disciples, is not named in connection with this dispute. Peter had been born again and his experience had been wonderful. Only just now, his Lord had worked a mighty wonder to produce a shekel for the Temple-tax, saying, "take, and give unto them for Me and thee." Thus Peter, at least for the time being, was preserved from the unseemly dispute as to who should be great in the Kingdom. But it was just then—"in that hour"—that the disciples came unto Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" (V. 1.)

For answer, the Lord Jesus called to Him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall **in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.**" (Vs. 2, 3.) It was not yet a question of greatness in the Kingdom: it was rather a question of **entering in**. Some of these very disciples were in danger of failing to get into the Kingdom at all.

It is plain that the Kingdom in manifestation is in view here. In the Kingdom in mystery form, its present phase, there is a mixture of true and false, good and bad, wheat and tares, but when the King shall come back to set up David's throne and reign, then there will be a sifting and only the wheat shall be garnered into the Kingdom; the tares will be burned.

Regeneration is suggested by our Lord's words, for in no other way can a man become

like a little child. The argument is the same as in the interview with Nicodemus.

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” (V. 4.)

That regeneration is not merely a figure of speech in our Lord’s mind is shown by His words in verses 5 and 6, where He is speaking of those who are born again. They are actually little children in His sight, and they are to Him as the apple of His eye: “And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me; but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.” There will be a long score for some people to answer for in the great Day. For though it pleases God to use the sufferings of this present time for the perfection of His little ones, yet there is woe for the man who causes these sufferings. “Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!” (V. 7.)

Entrance Into Life

The disciples are warned that nothing is to be cherished that may hinder their entrance into life and whatever suffering they may be called upon to endure is not worthy to be compared

with the glory of the Kingdom. "If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire." (Vs. 8, 9.)

The Children

Then follows some precious teaching about **little children**, and their position in God's great redemptive program. The Lord Jesus had been using the little child before Him as a figure of the new-born babe by regeneration. Now speaking of the little child itself, He says, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father Who is in heaven. For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost." (Vs. 10, 11.)

I am aware that the words of the eleventh verse—"for the Son of Man came to save that which was lost"—are omitted from the Revised Version, but there is considerable textual authority for them and they seem very fitting here. It is significant that the Lord Jesus here omits the word "seek" which He used in connection with the salvation of Zacchæus in Luke 19: 10. He came indeed to save the little children, and they

were lost but for His coming, but He did not need to seek them, for they had not gone astray.

The word **angels** in this passage has puzzled many readers, and has had many interpretations. It seems certain that our Lord is not here speaking of "guardian angels" but rather of the spirits of the little children who have passed out of this life. The word "angel" is used in this sense in Acts 12: 15, where Peter, after his miraculous deliverance from prison, made his appearance at the house of John Mark's mother. When the maid, Rhoda, reported his presence at the gate, they said unto her, "Thou art mad!" But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, "It is his angel!" But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed.

We are not to suppose from this that all the angels of heaven are redeemed human beings. The testimony of the Scriptures is perfectly clear that the angels are an entirely separate order of creatures. But in the passage before us the word "angels" is used to signify the spirits of little children who have gone from earth—they are in heaven, where they always behold the face of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To understand how the children of sinful men and women are included in the redemption of the Cross, it is necessary to see the general character and scope of that redemption. Jesus bled and died not only for believers. He also died for **unbelievers**. He died as the Lamb of God,

Which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29.) He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of **the whole world**. (1 John 2:2.) The fullness of God's purpose concerning Him is set forth in 1 John 4:14—"We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of **the world**." And in 2 Cor. 5:19 it is written that God was in Christ, reconciling **the world** unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

That is to say, all the sins of all the world, from the beginning of the world unto the end of time—all our sins were laid on Jesus, and He bore them away on the Cross. Therefore, the world is no longer condemned by sin. Jesus tasted death for **every man**. (Heb. 2:9.) Men are lost, not because they are sinners, but because they spurn the gift of salvation. This is the only thing that can condemn any man. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth is not condemned: he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Thus men are lost not because they are sinners, but because they will not have the Saviour, Who died for them, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring them to

God. Nevertheless, He is the Saviour of **all men**, specially of those that believe. (1 Tim. 4: 10.)

The little children are saved because they were included in the race for which Jesus died, and they have not forfeited their salvation by unbelief. Therefore, when they depart from earth before the age of responsibility, they go at once into God's presence, always to dwell with Him and behold His face. They are His peculiar treasure, loaned for a little time to the earth, but caught away before they could be defiled by the blighting sin of unbelief.

"Saviour, for the little one
Safely gathered in thine arms,
Ere the battle had begun,
Victor, spared from war's alarms,
We who toil and struggle sing
Praise to Thee, the children's King.

"First of all Thy martyr-band,
Infants for Thy sake were slain;
Day by day, from every land,
Infants swell the guileless train,
Who, this vale of tears untrod,
Stand before the throne of God.

"Thou dost give, and take away;
Full of love, in all Thy ways;
Be each mourner's heart to-day
Full of loving trust and praise,
In the midst of grief to bring
Thanks to Thee, the children's King."

"How think ye? if any man have a hundred

sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he finds it, verily I say unto you he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Vs. 12-14.) Thus does the Great Shepherd of the sheep show His tender love for the little lambs of the flock.

"If Thy Brother Sin Against Thee"

The second mention of the Church in **Matthew** is contained in the next paragraph (vs. 15-20.) Here are given the most explicit directions as to how to deal with a sinning brother. "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone; and if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (V. 15.) This is to be the object of the visit—to **gain thy brother**. Not to punish him; not to stand upon thy dignity and gain thy rights, but to **gain thy brother**. This is the first step. Go not about airing thy grievance and exposing thy brother's failure, but go, show him his fault **between thee and him alone**.

"But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established." (V. 16.) Here again, we need to tread carefully. In Galatians 6:1 it is written, "Brethren, even

if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is unpleasant work, but often very blessed. It is lowly labor—washing the disciples' feet, cleansing their walk from the defilement of the way—but it is fellowship with Jesus, and that is precious. This second step, if taken in the proper spirit, the spirit of gentleness, will usually result in the restoration of the offending brother. But if not—"if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church: and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the Publican." (V. 17.)

This offender, let us observe, is a Christian, a "**brother.**" And yet the Church is here commanded to exclude him from its fellowship so long as he refuses to purge himself of his offense. That the action of the Church, when taken in accordance with the Word of God, is fully authorized, may be seen from verse 18: "Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In other words, the Church acts with the full sanction of heaven in dealing thus with an unrepentant brother.

What then? Does he lose his salvation? Does he cease to be a Christian? Indeed, no; there is no possibility of that, for the Lord's promise for His sheep is that they shall never perish. But the sinning brother is out of communion, and

the Church is spared the shame of fellowship with his sin. It is not that the Church is to give him up now and let him go, with no further effort to restore him. Though he be as a Gentile and a Publican—that is, as an outsider—yet there should be unceasing prayer and untiring labor for him. In 1 Cor. 5: 5, there is a case in point. In that case the man was delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. In 2 Cor. 2 the brother is seen as repentant, and restored by the Church, and comforted.

Church discipline is almost a lost art in our day, and the fear is often expressed that to fully obey the directions given by our Lord would be to depopulate the Churches and seriously deplete the numbers in their fellowship. Exactly so; and it may be that it is for this depopulation and depletion that the Spirit of the Lord is waiting. "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but our iniquities have separated between us and our God, and our sins have hid His face from us, so that He will not hear." (Isa. 59: 1, 2.) We are too big, and yet we lust after numbers. As in the case of Gideon's dress-parade army, "the people are too many." The promise of prevailing prayer is not given to the crowd, but to the little flock. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by My Father Who is in heav-

en. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Vs. 19, 20.)

"Seventy Times Seven"

The subject of the **Kingdom** is again introduced by Peter in verse 21: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" Peter had never heard Paul's Gospel, and the Church was yet something in the future. He was on Jewish ground the moment he talked of limited forgiveness for a brother. The Rabbis decreed that a trespassing brother should be forgiven three times: Peter probably thought himself very magnanimous when he suggested seven times. The answer of Jesus was, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." And then He proceeds with a parable of the Kingdom—the so-called parable of the unmerciful servant. The teaching of the parable is that God has forgiven all men, and their debt was enormous. All we like sheep have gone astray, and Jehovah has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It follows, therefore, that men ought to forgive each other. Of course, this is impossible to the natural man, but that very fact and the knowledge of it was God's purpose in giving the Law—for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.

It may be noticed that in making the application of the parable, our Lord here used the plural pronoun, thus addressing all His disciples, and

not Peter individually as in chapter 16. "So shall also My heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every man his brother from your hearts." (V. 35.) It is the same principle as in the so-called Lord's prayer, in chapter 6. It is the Law of the Kingdom. In His instruction concerning the Church there was no question as to a believer forgiving his brother; that is taken for granted; but the question was of gaining the brother. In the Church God's forgiveness waits not on ours, for in Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7) and we are exhorted to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, not in order that God may afterwards forgive us, but **even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us**. May God make all this real to us! May our love toward our fellow-believers be without dissimulation! Abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good, may we be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another!

THE KING'S TEACHING

Chapter 19

The teaching of our Lord Jesus concerning the marriage relation occupies the greater part of the nineteenth chapter of our book. In the first two verses the journey from Galilee into Judea is passed over with brief mention. Great multitudes were following the Messiah wherever He went, "and He healed them there." (V. 2.) His enemies were awaiting Him in Judea, and there came unto Him Pharisees, tempting Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (V. 3.)

This had ever been a burning question among the Jews, and just at that particular time their leaders were sharply divided into two groups, one school insisting upon the husband's right to divorce his wife whenever he might be pleased to do so; and the other adhering to a stricter interpretation of the Law of Moses on the subject. It goes without saying that these Pharisees did not question Jesus in order to obtain authoritative information on the issue under discussion, but they were, as ever, seeking to lead Him into a trap—they were "tempting Him."

"And He answered and said, Have ye not read, that He which made them from the beginning

made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**" (Vs. 4-6.)

This does not satisfy these inquisitors, and they appeal to Moses. They say, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?" (V. 7.) Now, as a matter of fact, Moses did not **command** such a thing. He **permitted** it, in order to suppress a flagrant evil. (Compare Deut. 24:1-4.) This is pointed out in the Lord Jesus' reply. "He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart **suffered** you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Vs. 8, 9.)

This is very strong teaching in view of the prevalent laxness regarding the marriage tie, and the disciples say unto Him, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." But He said unto them, "All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men:

and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." (Vs. 10-12.) This passage has given rise to much controversy, and it is not free from difficulty. It is plain, however, that under its provisions everyone is to be left entirely free, as to whether to enter into the marriage relation or not. Celibacy, if it be voluntary, is permitted; but there is to be no enforced celibacy. The question must be decided by each individual for himself or herself.

Next to salvation or damnation, marriage is either the greatest blessing or the greatest curse that can come into human life. To say, as the disciples did in our chapter, that it is better not to marry, is to contradict the principle laid down at the beginning, when God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." But it is far better not to marry than to marry in a manner contrary to the will and Word of God. In such a case indeed, he that is married, instead of caring for the things that belong to the Lord, how He may please the Lord, may be caring more for the things of the world how he may please his wife. And in such a case "there is a difference also between the wife and the virgin. She that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married is careful for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." (1 Cor. 7:32-34.) But when

marriage is according to the revealed will of God, when it is entered into in the full realization of the sanction and blessing of the Lord, then is God pleased to make of it a mighty blessing.

Intermarriage with the heathen was Israel's curse, and intermarriage with the heathen is the Church's curse. A Christian who marries an unbeliever, thereby disobeys God, either deliberately or ignorantly. The Scriptures are perfectly explicit: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (2 Cor. 6: 14.) There is no choice about it; the only question is whether the child of God shall obey God or follow his or her own selfish impulse. In other words, whether to walk according to the Spirit or according to the flesh.

It is true that very often the unequal yoke has been put on in ignorance of God's command against it. And in some cases the yoke has become unequal because of the conversion of the husband or wife after the marriage. Such instances would seem to be covered by the Apostle's directions in 1 Cor. 7: 12-17: "If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they

holy. Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace. For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife? Only as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the Churches."

That is one thing. The situation is deplorable even in such a case. But it is quite another thing to deliberately and defiantly put the neck into the unequal yoke, in spite of God's known command against it. There can be little hope of happiness or fruitfulness in the Christian walk after that.

A young woman came to her pastor and said, "Pastor, will you pray for me?"

"Gladly," replied the preacher. "What is the particular thing you desire me to pray about?"

"Well, I expect to be married soon, and I want you to pray about that."

"Is your intended husband a Christian?"

"No, sir; he has never confessed the Lord Jesus."

"Then, in that case, I must withdraw my promise to pray for you."

"What? Do you mean that you will not pray for me?"

"Exactly that. For I cannot pray for God's blessing upon an act of sinful disobedience."

"I did not know you could be so unkind."

"My dear sister, I am kind in my unkindness. Do you think I ought to advise you to disobey God?"

"No, but I hoped my husband would become a Christian after we were married."

"Well, he probably would not. It is much more likely that he would drag you down towards his level. And, besides, God never told you to marry a man in order to convert him. His word to you is 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever.'"

And the testimony of that pastor is that the young woman decided then and there to obey God, be the cost what it might. Would to God that there were more such faithful shepherding in God's little flock! It might then be that the flock would not be so scattered as it is to-day, so entangled in the thickets of the world that it seems well nigh impossible to extricate it.

The pastor is in a place of peculiar responsibility in this matter, for he is usually called upon to officiate at the marriage. It is difficult to see the consistency of the pastor's act in "performing the ceremony," where one of the parties to the marriage is a believer and the other an unbeliever. If it be wrong for the believer to **put on** the unequal yoke, it must inevitably follow that it is also wrong for the pastor to **help him put it on**.

As for divorce, the New Testament seems to sanction the **separation** of husband and wife under certain circumstances, though without the

privilege of remarriage for either party while the other is living. Moses' provision in Deuteronomy 24 does not obtain in this Dispensation, and now we have returned to first principles—"What **God** hath joined together, let not **man** put asunder." The whole matter may be summed up in our Lord's words in Mark 10:11, 12: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

"Suffer the Little Children"

It is fitting that the little children should be brought into the picture just here, while the home and family relationships are in view. "Then were there brought unto Him little children, that He should lay His hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And He laid His hands on them, and departed thence." (Vs. 13-15.) This beautiful passage has been made to do duty as an argument for infant baptism. Of course there is not even the remotest suggestion of such a thing in the passage; nor, indeed, is there any such suggestion in the whole Bible. The position of little children in God's sight was fully discussed in our study of the eighteenth chapter.

The Rich Young Ruler

In verses 16 to 27 there is the story of the rich young man—Luke calls him a ruler—who came to Jesus and said: “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (V. 16.) This young man is on the ground of the Law; he is seeking life by doing. The divine Teacher met him on his own ground, in order to use the Law as a schoolmaster to bring this man to Himself, that he might be justified, not by works, but by faith. “Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.” If Jesus was not divine—if He was not God in the flesh—then He was not good. In the absolute sense, only God is good. “But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (V. 17.)

We do well to follow closely here, lest we err in supposing that Jesus is really teaching salvation by works of the Law. Rather, He is seeking to show, by means of the Law, how helpless the young man is to obtain life that way. By the Law shall no flesh be justified, but by the Law is the knowledge of sin. Therefore He said, “keep the commandments.”

“He saith unto Him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All

these things have I observed; what lack I yet?" (Vs. 18-20.)

It is plain that this young ruler in Israel is deceived concerning his own condition. Here he is actually claiming to have fulfilled the whole Law, at least in the second table of it. All his lifelong, according to his own view of it, he had loved his neighbor as himself! He must be awakened out of his self-satisfaction, and shown that he at this moment loves himself much better than his neighbor. Therefore Jesus says unto him, "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions." (Vs. 21, 22.)

There is a tradition that this young man was Lazarus, of Bethany, who afterward became a devoted disciple and whom Jesus brought back from the grave. We may not know as to the truth of the story, but it is surely to be hoped that the Law of Works did its work perfectly as a ministration of condemnation and death, and then led him back to Jesus, through Whom alone he could enter into life, and obtain the gift of righteousness which is by faith.

The Danger of Riches

The chapter closes with a warning against trusting in riches. "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. * * * *

It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. * * * With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Vs. 23-26.)

There is nothing the men of this world so much want as **money**; and there is nothing that so **hinders** them from the **knowledge** and **love** of **God**. It is an error to look upon godliness as a way of gain. But, as it is written, "godliness with contentment is great gain; for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that desire to be **rich** fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrowws. * * * Charge them that are **rich** in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be **rich in good works**, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed." (1 Tim. 6: 5-19.)

That godliness is profitable unto all things,

having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, is shown by our Lord's reply to Peter's question—"Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee; what then shall we have?" (V. 27.) And Jesus said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life. But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last." (Vs. 28-30.)

"What then shall we have?" This question of Peter's reveals his own state of heart. He had not yet received the fullness of the Spirit and he finds it easy to walk in the flesh. Let us not be occupied with ourselves and our own selfish desires. Let the question of our hearts be not "What then shall we have?" but rather "What then shall **He** have?" **He** Who forsook all for us, **He** Who loved us and gave Himself for us, **He** Who gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, **He** Who loveth us and hath loosed us from our sins in His Own blood and hath made Kings and Priests unto God and His Father—"What then shall **He** have?" It matters little what **we** have, for we have **Him**, and **He** is

our satisfying portion ; but unto **Him** be blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, for He is our God for ever and ever. Amen."

Peter's question brought forth a solemn warning from the King's lips, which is given in the next chapter.

THE KING'S WARNING

Chapter 20

The division of the Bible into **chapters** is undoubtedly a very great convenience, but the reader frequently finds himself wishing there might have been more inspiration in the manner in which the divisions were made. The chapter division at the point we have now reached in our book is especially awkward, for it breaks in at the middle of a paragraph and tends to obscure the vital connection between the two parts of the story.

The parable of the vineyard laborers, in the first sixteen verses of chapter 20 can only be understood in connection with what precedes it, in chapter 19, verses 23-30. The rich young ruler had gone away sorrowful, for he had been suddenly awakened to see his real condition of sin and selfishness. Jesus then turned to His disciples with the words, "Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." The disciples were amazed at this, for they were like other men and looked upon riches as something altogether desirable. Who, then, could be **saved**? If it were hard

for a rich man, surely no one else would have any prospect of salvation whatever. And Jesus, looking upon them said, "With men it is impossible but with God all things are possible."

Then Peter spoke up. If riches were a hindrance, then poverty must be an advantage. So he said, "We have left all and followed Thee"—exactly what the rich young man had been told to do—"What then shall we have?" The Lord Jesus in His answer first assured them that every sacrifice and every service would be fully remembered and rewarded, and then He sounded a warning. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life." The Judge of all the earth may be trusted to do right. "But"—and here comes the warning:

"But many shall be last that are first and first that are last. For the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing in the marketplace idle; and to them he said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth

hour and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard. And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, **beginning from the last unto the first.** And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a **denarius.** And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more, and they likewise received every man a **denarius.** And when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have spent but one hour, and thou has made them equal unto us which have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat! But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a denarius? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be **first** and the **first last.**" (Ch. 19: 23-20: 16.)

I have substituted the original Greek name for the coin referred to in this parable, because the word "**penny**" gives the whole narrative a ridiculous sound to our ears. And indeed it is not a very great improvement to use the word

"shilling" as has been done in the American Standard edition of the Revised Version. A penny, or a shilling, would not be a fair day's wages, but the denarius was an unusually liberal day's pay for laborers.

The denarius or penny in this story does not represent the salvation which is received by all believers alike, for salvation is not earned by **works**, but by **grace** are we saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the **gift of God**: not of works, lest any many should boast. (Eph. 2:8, 9.) The **wages** of sin is death; but the **gift** of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 6:23.)

Nor yet are we to learn from our Lord's parable that all **rewards** at the judgment seat of Christ are to be **equally** divided among believers. Such interpretation would flatly contradict the testimony of the Scriptures, which plainly teach that there will be degrees of reward for service. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any many buildeth on the foundation, gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire: and the fire itself shall prove each man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a **reward**. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer **loss**; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire."

(1 Cor. 3:11-15.) And again, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
(Rev. 22:12.)

The key to the interpretation of the parable is very carefully placed by our Lord. Indeed there are duplicate keys, for one lies just at the beginning of the parable and another just at the end of it. In the first place we read, "But many shall be last that are first, and first that are last." In the second instance our Lord is saying, "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

The teaching of the parable must be sought in connection with Peter's question and the warning words uttered by the Lord Jesus in reply. "What then shall we have?" was the question in Peter's mind and on Peter's lips. Our Lord answered the question graciously, but the question was wrong; it was selfish; it savored not of the things that be of God, but the things that be of the world. "What shall we have?" It is the grasping cry of the natural man everywhere. The Lord's servants may trust Him to see to it that they shall have all and much more than all that is due to them. But many shall be last that are first, and first that are last. These Apostles were the first to be called into the Lord's service in the new Kingdom; they must have a care, lest they should fall behind those who should be called later. Peter himself was the very first soul born again under the personal

teaching of the Lord Jesus: he must watch zealously lest in the time of reckoning he should be last instead of first. For many—not all, but **many**—that were first should be last, and many that were last should be first.

We are not bound to suppose that when we who are the Lord's servants appear before the **Bema**, or judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body, there will actually be such a scene as our Lord depicts in this parable. Those called into the vineyard early in the day will not appear there in a sour and envious spirit toward their fellow-servants who were called at the eleventh hour. The type is contrasting rather than parallel all through the parable. The unseemly wrangle is just an exhibition of what might be expected of the men of this world under the supposed circumstances. And the precise point of the story lies in the fact that Peter was walking in the flesh and acting as a natural, worldly man, when he asked the question, "What then shall we have?"

The laborers who were the first to be called into service bargained for their wages before beginning work. The others trusted the householder to do what was right. The warning of the parable is directed against the spirit of bargaining in the service of God.

It ought to be remarked that the men whose service began late in the day do not represent those who accept the Gospel call late in life after rejecting it over and over again. These men,

when asked why they were not at work in the vineyard, answered, "Because no man hath hired us." It is a blessed fact that while there is life there is hope; that—

"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return"—

but this parable at least does not have in view the Gospel-hardened sinner who has all his life trodden under foot the Son of God. We may thank God that even for such, salvation is freely offered, but those depicted in our parable are they who had never heard the invitation until late in the day. When they heard it they were ready; they were waiting for it; and their response was prompt, and their brief service faithful.

Let us observe, also that the Lord's sovereignty is insisted upon in the parable. Jehovah is good and doeth good, and in whatever He does He is supreme and not answerable to any man. It is lawful for Him to do what He will with His own. Is thine eye evil because He is good? Have a care, for though thou mayest now be enjoying the highest privileges, there is danger of thy falling short of the fullest blessing. So the last shall be first, and the first last.

Very possibly the coin of equal value given to each servant in the vineyard may suggest to us the comforting thought that when we do finally reach the end of our course and are brought before our Lord for a review of our poor service,

He will find something to commend in each one of us. As it is written, "Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and **then shall each man have his praise from God.**" (1 Cor. 4: 5.)

The Secret of Greatness

How very slowly does the idea of real sacrifice and service take hold upon us! There is much talk of consecration and self-denial, but how sharp is the contrast between the reality and the sham! It is just the difference between the **power** of godliness and the **form** thereof. Notice how this great difference is shown in the next section of our chapter:

"And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way He said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the Chief Priests and Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge and to crucify: and the third day He shall be raised up." (Vs. 17-19.)

And it was just then—just as He was setting His face like a flint toward Calvary—just as He was seeking to lead His disciples into somewhat of fellowship with His sufferings—just as He was thinking and speaking of the shame, and

the abuse, and the thorns, and the mocking, and the scourge, and the Cross—

“Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping Him, and asking a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto Him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand, in Thy Kingdom.” (Vs. 20, 21.)

It is enough to make the heart sick, thus to behold the selfish scheming for place and advantage that was going on in the very approach to the Way of Sorrows. And yet this wonderful Man—this adorable Son of God—did not lose heart. Behold how graciously and how patiently He dealt with these, His foolish little children, who saw everything upside down.

“Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say unto Him, We are able. He saith unto them, My cup indeed ye shall drink: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left hand, is not Mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of My Father.” (Vs. 22, 23.)

By this time the rest of the disciples were greatly excited. “When the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren.” (V. 24.) Doubtless they feared that they might lose something for themselves. It was all wrong, and their hearts were blind and self-centered. “Jesus called them unto Him

and said, Ye know that the rulers of the **Gen-**
tiles lord it over them, and their great ones ex-
ercise authority over them. Not so shall it be
among **you**: but whosoever would become great
among you shall be your servant, and whoso-
ever would be first among you shall be your
slave: even as the Son of Man came not to be
served, but to serve, and to give His life a
ransom for many." (Vs. 25-28.) May God
Himself enable us to learn this secret of the
Lord, that the only way to true greatness is the
way of lowly service, the way of vicarious sac-
rifice—the way of the **Cross**.

Blind Eyes Opened

Our chapter closes with an account of the
healing of two blind men at Jericho. An **ap-**
parent discrepancy between this account and
those of Mk. 10 and Lu. 18 has led to some con-
fusion. The Scofield Reference Bible gives the
following explanation: "**Matthew** and **Mark**
obviously refer to a work of healing as Jesus
departed from Jericho. Bartimeus, the active
one of the two, the one who cried, 'Jesus, Thou
Son of David,' is specifically mentioned by **Mark**.
Of the other one of the two we know nothing.
The healing described by **Luke** (18:35) oc-
curred before Jesus entered Jericho. As to the
form of appeal, 'Son of David' (cf. Matt. 9:27;
15:22; 21:9), Jesus must have been so ad-
dressed constantly. The narratives, therefore,

supplement, but in no wise contradict each other."

The restoration of sight to the blind was an unknown thing, even among the miracles of the Old Testament. It was held by the rabbis that this was reserved for the Messiah, and that it should be the mark of His authority. It is very significant that just here, as the King of Israel was about to make a formal and final presentation of the Kingdom to the nation, He should perform this miracle. Then, too, it was at Jericho, the city of the curse. Jericho is ever a type of this world; and it was here that Jesus came to be a light and blessing. He came a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Him should not abide in darkness. (John 12:46.)

Blindness is a striking figure of the spiritual condition of the lost. "If our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this Age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, Who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:3-6.)

These two men were in the way where Jesus walked. They heard that Jesus was passing by. "Faith cometh by hearing," and they cried

out. Though the crowd rebuked them, they would not be denied or hindered. They cried out the more.

And Jesus "stood still"—Bless His holy name! He ever stands still when the cry of faith is lifted to Him. He stood still, and called. He was moved with compassion, and He healed them. Instantly their eyes were opened: "Straightway they received their sight, and followed Him." His sheep they were: therefore, they heard His voice and He knew them, and they followed Him. He was their Shepherd—the Good Shepherd—and He was about to lay down His life for the sheep.

THE KING ENTERS HIS CAPITAL

Chapter 21

We are now approaching the final scene in the greatest tragedy of all the history of the world. The wondrous pathos and grandeur of this march to Calvary of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is unequaled in all history and in all literature.

To be sure, the march to **Calvary** was by way of **Jerusalem**; the march to the **Cross** was by way of a certain **glory**; the march to the place where the cry should be heard, "**Crucify Him! Crucify Him!**" was by way of the place where the people cried, "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**" But this Man, Christ Jesus, was not deceived by that which lay between. Beyond Jerusalem He saw Calvary; beyond the acclamations of the people He heard their angry exclamations against Him; beyond the throne of David, which for the moment seemed to be His, He saw the Cross looming up in all its awful solemnity on that hill outside the gate.

There is great need of carefully observing at every step of the way, as we follow our Lord, how accurately, how exactly the Scriptures are fulfilled; and we must remember all the time that we are looking upon a King, nay, **the King**. In a sense which is true of none other, this Man was and is **the King**, and His Kingship is in the

forefront in this chapter, as, indeed, it is all through the Gospel of **Matthew**. **Mark** may set Him forth as the humble, obedient Servant, toiling with but one purpose, namely, the fulfillment of His Father's will; **Luke** may reveal Him unto us as the Son of Man, the second Adam, Who took upon Himself the sins of the race; and **John** may uncover Him to our enraptured gaze as the Son of God, nay, more—as the very God of God Himself, Who hath taken upon Himself the human form and lived among men; but **Matthew** is concerned always with the royalty of the Man Christ Jesus. He in none the less a Man, a Servant, God, but He is in **Matthew** emphatically a King—the King, Whose right it is to reign, not only over His own people, but over the whole world.

You will notice that at the King's entrance into His capital there is the royal edict, "The Lord hath need of them;" and there is the loyal obedience, "The disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them;" and then there is the literal fulfillment of the prophetic Word in Zech., 9:9. **Matthew** points this out, and declares that, "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." It has been noted that a very important clause of the prophecy is omitted in **Matthew**. In Zechariah it reads, "Rejoice greatly, O daugh-

ter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: **He is just, and having salvation**; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Stupid unbelief has pointed out that this is an imperfection in the Bible; that **Matthew's** knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures was inaccurate, and, therefore, the whole doctrine of verbal inspiration is supposed to fall to the ground. But the anointed eye sees here—far from an evidence of imperfection—one of the marvelous proofs of the perfection of the Word of God. These words are omitted for the reason that when Jesus came into Jerusalem in what is called "the triumphal entry" He did not come with justification and salvation for Israel. He knew perfectly well, and, indeed, the Word of God had told it out over and over again, that His people would openly, as they had already done in reality, reject Him and cast Him out; and so there was no salvation for them for the moment. The complete fulfillment of that prophecy must await the **Second Coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall indeed come, having justification and salvation in the fullest sense. The marginal reading in **Zechariah** is very interesting; it is, "He is just and saving Himself." Now Jesus, so far as the action of the people was concerned, was not justified; He was condemned and set aside by them; and it was because, for that time, He refused to save **Himself** that He was able to save others.

Another Scripture fulfilled here is in the 118th Psalm. A study of this Psalm will show how perfectly the Spirit of Truth has pictured therein the ride from Bethphage to Jerusalem, as well as that which followed. The Hebrew word translated "Send now prosperity!" in verse 25, is "Hosanna!" as in **Matthew**.

It is the essence of realized sonship and communion with God to be able to say, under all circumstances, as Messiah is saying in Psalm 118, "His mercy endureth for ever,"—facing the Cross, facing death, or trial of any kind, to be able to say, "The Lord is good, and doeth good." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," "I will bless the Lord 'at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

"Who Is This?"

There is a great question in verse 10: "**Who is this?**" And in verse 11, the wrong answer which came from the multitude—wrong because so far short of the truth—"This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Many a man is saying this today; many a Jew is saying, "He was a good man, a great Prophet," but he goes no further. **Who is this?** This is **God** in the flesh. "This is our God; we will trust in Him." The fact that He was a Prophet is purely incidental; He was the Priest, the King, as well as the Prophet; He is the Anointed of the Lord, **Jehovah, Immanuel, God with us!**

The King in His Own House

In verses 12 to 17 is given the act of the King in cleansing the Temple. Now this is not the same cleansing as in John 2. There it was, "**My Father's** house," and, "The zeal of **Thine** house hath eaten Me up;" here it is, "**My** house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." There is another important difference shown in this quotation from Isaiah 56:7. You will notice that the words, "**for all people,**" are omitted. The word is plural here; it should read "peoples," as it does in the Revision. Jesus omitted that little clause, "for all peoples," because the Temple which He was then cleansing was not a house of prayer for all peoples. The Millennial Temple, pictured by **Ezekiel**, shall be that, and the nations shall come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14); but it was true, even then, that that Temple was a house of prayer in God's purpose, and they had made it a den of thieves, a house of merchandise.

Following the cleansing, comes the healing. It is ever so; there can be no work of healing until there has first been the cleansing.

His Wonderful Works

Now the Chief Priests and Scribes were sorely displeased when they "saw the wonderful things that he **did.**" Formalism can never endure any manifestation of real power. These ritualists

had no objection to religion, as such, if everything could be done according to their ritual, but when there was an evidence of real power, when God began in reality to **do** things, then the formalists were indignant. But Jesus was pleased by the same things that displeased them. Because the children cried out in the Temple in praises to God, the Chief Priests and Scribes were greatly shocked and distressed by such disorderly proceedings, and asked, "Hearest Thou what these say?" And in His reply the King expresses His pleasure, "Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" He was quoting from Psalm 8. Now this Psalm is taken up in the second chapter of the Hebrews, and the Messianic character of it is there seen; but if you turn to the Psalm itself, you will notice that it reads there, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has Thou **ordained strength** because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." The Lord Jesus quoted from the Septuagint Version. Let us learn from this, for the Spirit of God is unfolding His own meaning here, that God's way of **perfecting praise** is in and through weak instrumentalities. It is ever so; His **strength** is manifested only in our **weakness**. In any other attitude we only hinder Him.

"And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there." As there was no room for Him in the inn at Bethlehem,

so there is none for Him in Jerusalem, though both were called the cities of David, and He was the Root and Offspring of David. But let us bless God that He did find a lodging place; He did find a place in which to lay His head, though it was "out of the city."

In verses 18 to 22 is given the King's miraculous sign of approaching judgment. "Now in the morning, as He returned into the city, He hungered." Though the city had rejected Him and cast Him out, He was ever returning to it. He came to do the will of Him that sent Him. "And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away." O, the marvel of it! Here was **God**, and He was **hungry**—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and He was hungry! He had taken upon Himself our nature, He was "made like unto His brethren," and yet He was God in the flesh. The very realm of nature itself obeyed His slightest word. Here was a fig tree, green and flourishing in appearance, and just at a word from His hungry mouth it withered and died. This miracle is the key to the chapter, and we shall return to it.

In verses 20 to 22 is given the principle of prayer. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." It is the mighty, potent weapon which God has put into the hands of His people. Any one who

is really in sympathy with God through Christ may ask what he will and it shall be done unto him.

The False Shepherds Warned

Now comes the King's warning for the false leaders. They ask Him a question in verse 23, "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" But their question was not an honest one, and He replied by asking another, concerning the baptism of John, whether it was from heaven, or of men. And they said among themselves, "If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men—we fear the people; for all hold John as a Prophet." So they evaded the question. They were unwilling to acknowledge the truth. So they said, "We cannot tell." And He answered, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." Then follows immediately the parable of the two sons. "A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went." This son represents the Publicans and harlots. "And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not." This second son represents the leaders—the Pharisees and Scribes. Their profession was good—"I go, sir;" but it was not followed by obedience. So

it is with men to-day; O, what multitudes are saying, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord," when they would do no such thing. It is profession without any real heart-purpose to do the will of God.

Warning to the Nation

Then is given, in addition to the warning to the leaders, the warning to the nation itself, in the parable of the vineyard, verses 33 to 46. "Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which will render

him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures,

‘The Stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the Head of the Corner ;
This was from the Lord,
And it is marvelous in our eyes?’

Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a Prophet.”

Who is this nation to which the Kingdom of God is committed? In 1 Pet. 2 : 9 we read, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The Church of God is the new nation, a holy nation, gathered out of all the nations. Not that the Church is the Kingdom. It is not ; but the Kingdom of God is committed to the Church in this present Dispensation, until Israel shall be taken up again.

Jesus is the Stone Which the builders rejected and Which has become the Head of the Corner. He is to Israel “a Stone of stumbling, and a

Rock of offence." To the Church He is the great Rock Foundation. To the Gentile world He is the Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, "and he that falleth on this Stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will scatter him as dust."

This is surely a reference to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, given in the second chapter of **Daniel**: "Thou sawest till that a Stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the Stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

The Sign of the Fig Tree

The teaching of this chapter turns upon the dispensational meaning of the sign of the blasted fig tree and the parables which follow it. The vineyard is a familiar Old Testament type of the nation of Israel. The fig tree is a figure of the Jewish nation in the time of our Lord's First Advent. In Psalm 80 we read of the vine which the Lord brought out of Egypt. He planted that vine in good soil in the Holy Land, He hedged it about, He protected it from enemies on every side; but when He looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes, it

was "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine." (See also Isa. 5: 1-7.) And that whole people was taken out of that land into another. The ten-tribe Kingdom never returned, but the two-tribe Kingdom came back, or a remnant of it, and in **Luke** (Ch. 13: 6-9), as well as in our present chapter in **Matthew**, verses 19 and 20, the later history of this remnant is given. The story in **Luke** reads: "He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit there- and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." The Gardener, I take it, is Jesus Himself; and O, how He did dig about the fig tree of His people of Judah in those years of His ministry! and finally He gave up His life for it. And when, after He had gone up into Heaven, it still failed to bring forth fruit, God did cut it down and take it away out of that land, and it never has cumbered the ground in His vineyard since. In the meantime, God planted the true Vine. When the righteous Branch came, He was not recognized as such, but was rejected and cast out of the vineyard; therefore, God planted Him in the heavenly soil, and we who believe on Him

are branches, baptized into His Body by the Holy Spirit, unto His Name's honor and glory. (John 15; 1 Cor. 12.)

But God is not through with the earthly vine. Jesus shall return. As it is written in Jer. 23: 5-8, "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice **in the earth**. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah-Tsidkeenu. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, Jehovah liveth, Which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, Jehovah liveth, Which brought up and Which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; **and they shall dwell in their own land.**" Let us bless God that the time is coming when He shall return, and the true Vine shall be planted in the vineyard which at present is devastated and demolished. But all this awaits the replanting of the earthly vine. In that day, according to Isa. 27: 6, "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

The fig tree is Judah, it must be remembered; and it was Judah, not "all Israel," that rejected Jesus. The ten tribes had nothing to do with it, for they were already the lost tribes, though

there were individuals of all the tribes found in the land in the time of Jesus. It has been pointed out that the only "Jew," strictly speaking, among Jesus' disciples, was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. This gives great force to John 1:11, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Nathanael was a representative and type of the lost ten tribes, found "under the fig tree," and owning Jesus, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, as the Son of God and King of Israel. Like this Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile, so "all Israel" shall be delivered from ungodliness; and in that day—the day of His power—His people shall be willing. (See Psalm 110.)

The blasting of the fig tree has often been used as a basis for criticism of the Lord Jesus. Men have said that He acted in undue haste and anger, as it is stated in Mark 11:13 that "the time of figs was not yet." Now, it is a peculiarity of the fig tree that the fruit comes before the leaves, and if the time of figs was not yet, neither was it the time for leaves. This gives us the key. By its foliage, the tree was professing to have fruit upon it: so the Jewish people had much of religious **profession** and **pretension**, but no **fruit**. There never was a time when they were so punctilious in religious matters as in the time when Jesus came, and as the fig tree was bearing so many leaves, He had a right to expect some fruit; therefore, He acted righteously, in the type, when He said, "No man eat

fruit of thee hereafter for ever." The fig tree is cut down; and when Judah is again planted in the land, it will not be as a fig tree, but as a part of the restored vine, for in that day the twelve tribes shall be reunited; they shall dwell in one fold, and one King shall rule over them, even Jehovah-Jesus, the Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. Men shall not, indeed, eat from the fig tree, but from the restored vineyard.

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I Jehovah do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in Me; who would set the briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." (Isa. 27: 2-6.)

"The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this."

THE KING AND HIS ENEMIES

Chapter 22

In the 22d chapter the King is still replying to His enemies' questionings of chapter 21. They had asked, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" The Lord Jesus' answer is contained in three parables: (1) the Parable of the Two Sons; (2) the Parable of the Vineyard; and (3) the Parable of the Marriage. The last of these is found in chapter 22.

In the Parable of the Marriage, God the Father is depicted as a certain King, Who made a marriage for His Son. The Old Testament Prophets are the servants first sent forth to call the invited guests—Israel—to the marriage feast: and they would not come.

Between verses 3 and 4 the Cross is set up, and everything made ready. On the great Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) other servants went forth, still inviting the people of Israel. Led by Peter, and filled with the Holy Ghost, a band of 120 servants pressed home the invitation upon the multitude of "Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." These servants told them that were bidden, "Behold, I have made ready My dinner; My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage

feast." Compare Acts 2:39—"For unto you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him."

Peter and John, Stephen and James, as well as other servants of God, went on pressing the invitation upon Israel. "But they made light of it and went their ways—'every one to his own way'—and the rest laid hold on His servants and treated them shamefully and killed them." Thus did Stephen die, heading the noble band of martyrs, and praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

"But the King was wroth: and He sent His armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." (V. 7.) Here God speaks of the Roman armies as His own, while disowning and repudiating Jerusalem: "His armies * * * * burned **their** city." (Compare Dan. 9:26.)

The sending of the Gospel invitation to the Gentiles is seen in verses 9 and 10. The servants are instructed to bid as many as they shall find. Thus even the outcasts are gathered together—both bad and good are there—and the wedding is filled with guests. (Compare Rev. 19:6-9.)

The fate of the outward professor is set forth in verses 11-13. Christ is the Wedding-Garment, free to all the guests, to be "put on" by all. (Compare Rom. 13:14.) Those who have the form of godliness without its power will be cast

out unto the weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called—"invited" here—but few chosen. Those are "chosen" who put on the wedding garment provided by the King.

Traps for the King

In verses 15 to 40 we have three distinct attempts to "snare Him in His talk"—vain attempts, for His words are ever pure words:

"His lips with grace o'erflow."

First came the Pharisees and Herodians. These natural enemies and opposites, representatives respectively of strict **ritualism** and loose **worldliness**, made common cause against the Prince of Glory. Their question was full of subtlety, and the Lord Jesus' answer was full of wisdom. It is a well-established principle that "wherever the money of any King is current, there the inhabitants acknowledge that King as their lord." So it was that, when He said unto them, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," they marveled, and left Him, and went away.

Then came the Sadducees, the **rationalists**, who denied the resurrection. They were **materialists**, rejecting everything supernatural, denying the existence of angels and the future life. Their method of argument was the **reductio ad absurdum**, a method commonly followed in our day, by which it is attempted to destroy the truth

by making it seem ridiculous. These Sadducees came saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.' Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; and in like manner the second also, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her." (Vs. 24-28.)

It was a cleverly framed question, but the reply of Jesus is yet more remarkable, for in a few words He testified to the reality of the **resurrection**, the existence of **angels** and **heaven**, and the verbal **inspiration of the Scriptures**: "Ye do err," He said, "Not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not the God of the **dead**, but of the **living**." (Vs. 29-32.)

The Sadducees silenced, the Pharisees return to the attack. They have left the Herodians behind now and are seeking to entangle the Lord Jesus through an expert in the Scriptures—"a Lawyer." (Vs. 34-40.) He was soon answered, for

Jesus refused to be drawn into a comparison of different parts of the Word of God. It must be considered as a whole and not as in separated parts. "All Scripture is God-breathed." (2 Tim. 3: 16.)

The King's Enemies Confounded

In the final paragraph of our chapter, the Lord Jesus turns questioner, with the result that "no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions." (V. 46.) From this little section we may gather three valuable lessons:

First—Jesus shows that He is David's **Son** and David's **Lord**. He is of the seed of David according to the flesh and the Son of God according to the Spirit of Holiness. (Romans 1: 3, 4.)

Second—He recognizes the Psalm written by David as being from the Holy Spirit. (Compare v. 43, R. V., with Mark 12: 36 and Luke 20: 42.)

Third—He anticipates His return to His heavenly home, and His welcome there, as described in the 110th Psalm. Thirty-three years before, He had left that glorious home, girding Himself for His mighty work in the earth. Upon His return we may well believe all heaven rang with glad acclaim, as "Jehovah said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou on My right hand, till I put Thine enemies under Thy feet.'"

He sits there now, on the right hand of the Majesty on High, **expecting**. And we, too, are

expecting, for it is written that this same Jesus shall come again in like manner as He went away. We have turned unto God from idols, to **serve** the living and true God, and **wait** for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, Who delivered us from the wrath to come. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning; yea, more than watchmen for the morning!" (Ps. 130:6.)

THE KING'S FINAL DISCOURSE

Chapter 23

We have now reached in our study the beginning of the **Olivet discourse**. There are five formal discourses of our Lord recorded in **Matthew**, all of them ending with a similar formula. (Compare chapter 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1.) The Olivet discourse is the last of these, and includes chapters 23, 24 and 25.

Let us not forget that we are reading the majestic pronouncements of **the King**. There are many Kings and Princes in the world, but He only can truly be called **the King**. He is not one of many: He is **the King of Glory**; He is **the Prince of Peace**.

Warning Against False Leadership

In the thirteenth chapter of **Romans** the principle is laid down that human government is a divinely appointed institution. "The powers that be are ordained of God," and they are to be obeyed in all matters of civil duty. So here the King says, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not." (Vs. 2, 3.)

Touching the spiritual realm, the King decrees

that there must not be submission to any man as father, teacher or spiritual director. "Be not ye called '**Rabbi**'; for One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: For One is your Father, even He Who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Vs. 8-12.)

There is a much needed warning here against the use of fleshly titles, but there is also a far deeper lesson. "The injunction of Christ in verses 8-10," as Dr. Weston writes, "is a declaration of the essential relations of man to God. Three things constitute a Christian: what he **is**, what he **believes**, what he **does**—doctrine, experience, practice. Man needs for his spiritual being three things: **life, instruction, guidance**; just what our Lord declares in the ten words of the Gospel—'I am the **Way**, and the **Truth** and the **Life**.' The Roman Catholic Church has caught these three things with its usual insight, and avows its ability to supply them. The office of the Roman Catholic Church is claimed to be threefold—the **priestly** office, imparting and sustaining **life** by means of the sacraments; the **teaching** office, endowed with **infallibility**; the guiding office, by spiritual **confessors**. These three things are just what our Lord forbids in the passage under consideration. Acknowledge no man as **father**, for no man can impart or sustain spiritual life; install no man as an infallible

teacher; allow no one to assume the office of **spiritual director**; your relation to God and to Christ is as close as that of any other person." ("The Genesis of the New Testament," by H. G. Weston, pp. 110, 111.)

False Leaders Openly Denounced

Our Lord Jesus appears in this passage (vs. 13-36) in a strange role, as with scathing words He hurls woe upon woe at these blind guides sitting in Moses' seat. The denunciation is **seven-fold**, the fourteenth verse being omitted from the best manuscripts and from the Revised Version. Seven is the number of **completeness**, and surely this bitter arraignment of Israel's false shepherds is complete. The summing up is in verses 32-36: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye **serpents**, ye offspring of **vipers**, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold, I send unto you Prophets, and wise men, and Scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your Synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

And surely, one scarcely needs to remark upon the awful fulfillment of this prediction in the Destruction of Jerusalem less than forty years

later, and in the terrible persecutions which have followed these people—the chosen people of God—all because they would not come unto Him that they might have life.

The King's Farewell to His Capital

The lamentation of verses 37 to 39, over the doomed but beloved city, is in sharpest contrast with the terrible woes preceding it, and is full of pathos: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the Prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!'"

How sad is this wail from the bleeding heart of the disowned King—bleeding indeed, though not for Himself, but for His stubborn and rebellious people, who are His kinsmen according to the flesh!

Bless God for that little word, "till," which points to the bright beacon light of hope just ahead! In the day of rejection and humiliation, His lament was, "How often would I have gathered thee...and ye would not." He would, but they would not. He was willing but they were not willing. Let us thank God for His promise to the Lord Jesus when He said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." (Ps.

110.) It is to that day that this word "till" points forward. Many times in the New Testament this word is thus used to direct our attention to those things not seen as yet but which must shortly come to pass:

First—Matt. 22:24—"Jehovah said unto my Lord, 'Sit Thou on My right hand, till I put Thyne enemies under Thy feet.'" (Compare Psalm 110:1 and 1 Cor. 15:25.)

Second—Luke 19:13—"Occupy till I come."

Third—Romans 11:25—"A hardening in part hath befallen Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

Fourth—Luke 21:24—"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Fifth—Acts 3:18-21—"The things which God foreshadowed by the mouth of all the Prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ Who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets that have been from of old."

Sixth—2 Thes. 2:7—"The mystery of lawlessness doth already work; only there is One (i. e., the Holy Spirit) that restraineth now, until He be taken out of the way."

Seventh—I Cor. II: 26—"As often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till **He come.**"

"Till He come!" Oh, let the words
Linger on the trembling chords.
Let the little while between
In their golden light be seen.
Let us think how Heaven and home
Lie beyond that—"till He come."

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the Earth so poor and vast,
All our life joy overcast?
Hush! Be every murmur dumb:
It is only 'till He come."

"See, the feast of love is spread.
Drink the wine, and break the bread.
Sweet memorials,—till the Lord
Call us 'round His heav'nly board:
Some from Earth, from Glory some,
Sever'd only 'till He come."

THE KING AS PROPHET

Chapter 24

The twenty-fourth chapter of **Matthew** is the climax of the predictive teachings of the Lord Jesus. It is altogether a Jewish prophecy. It must ever be remembered, in the study of Prophecy, that Jesus Christ was, first of all, "a Minister of the **Circumcision** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," and it is only afterwards that His ministry is toward the nations—"that the **Gentiles** might glorify God for His mercy." (Ro. 15:8, 9.)

The Church does not figure in this chapter at all. She was still, when these words were spoken, the **mystery** hid in God. (Eph. 3.) It follows, therefore, that the Rapture of the Church is not in view here, but rather "the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven." (2 Thess. 1.) What we see here is not His coming for His saints, to catch them up to Himself in the air, but His coming **with** His saints, **to the earth**, to set up the throne of David, which is broken down, and to establish the Millennial Kingdom.

The whole period of the present parenthetical Church Dispensation is entirely omitted, and treated as if it were not. This is not unusual; indeed, it is the rule in the prophetic Scriptures.

Therefore, if we are to understand the chapter before us, we must eliminate the **Church** and

the Church **Age** altogether from our calculations, and think only of the **Kingdom**, which is to be manifested when the King comes back to the earth again.

The Threefold Question

It is important to observe the connection between the queries of the disciples and what precedes them. In chapter 23 our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem is written, closing with the prophetic word of verses 38 and 39: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" Then as Jesus went out from the Temple and His disciples proudly called His attention to the grandeur and beauty of the sacred edifice, Jesus uttered His solemn prediction of Jerusalem's destruction. (Ch. 24: 1, 2.) The disciples followed Him out to Olivet and then questioned Him privately. Three things they asked Him to tell them:

First—"When shall these things be?"

Second—"What shall be the sign of Thy coming?"

Third—"And of the End of the Age?"

The Answer

In His reply the Lord Jesus does not tell **when** "these things" should be, except that He shows the order of "these things," in their relation to one another. He begins rather, by telling when

these things should **not** be, warning His disciples against mistaking the signs of the End-Time. (See vs. 36, 42.)

The little phrase "**The End**" is the key to the prophetic arrangement of the chapter. It marks a very definite point of time, and always the same point. It is not the End of the world, as the Greek word in verse 3 is not "**kosmos**," but "**aion**," and signifies **Age** or **Dispensation**. What the disciples were asking about was the End of the Jewish Age or Dispensation in which they were then living. Now that Dispensation has not yet been completed. It was interrupted by the coming in of the Church at Pentecost, as Peter's sheet let down from heaven. (Acts 10.) There will be seven years of the Jewish Age yet to run after the Church has been caught up into heaven. This period of seven years is **Daniel's seventieth week**. (Dan. 9.)

While the King is Away

The characteristics of the interval during the King's absence from the earth are shown in verses 4 to 14 of our chapter. There were to be false Messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. These, however, were not to mark "**the End**," but "**the beginning** of sorrows." (Vs. 5-8.) Though characteristic of the whole interval, these signs will be intensified as the great Day of God's Wrath approaches.

Universal anti-semitism, or hatred toward the

Jew, is seen in verses 9-13, followed by universal evangelization, the **Gospel of the Kingdom** being preached in all the world as a witness to all nations. (V. 14.) This **Gospel of the Kingdom** is not the message entrusted to the Church to-day, but rather the message to be proclaimed after the Church is taken away. It is the Gospel preached by the Lord Jesus and His disciples during the days of His flesh. Our Gospel is the **Gospel of the Grace of God**, by which we proclaim salvation for all who **believe** on the name of the Son of God: the Gospel of the Kingdom is a proclamation of the near approach of the King. His servants shall then go everywhere preaching and saying, "**Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!**"—"and then shall the **End** come!" That is, the End of the Seven Years period, the End of the Jewish Dispensation, the End of the awful horrors of **The Great Tribulation**.

This fourteenth verse is often misapplied as predicting universal world-evangelization before the Lord's coming for His saints. As we have already pointed out, the true application is to that period which must follow the catching-up of the Church. The Church is not waiting for any **sign** whatsoever: we are waiting only for **Him**.

The Day of Wrath

In verses 15 to 28 the prophecy takes up in

detail the scenes of **The Great Tribulation**, spoken of by **Daniel** the Prophet. **Luke's** description of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus shows that it was but a type of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Antichrist, at the head of the combined armies of the allied nations of the world. (Compare Zech. 14.)

The King's Glorious Return

In verses 29 to 31 we have the glorious coming of the Son of Man to judgment. "Immediately after the Tribulation of those days" shall He come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The sun and moon shall hide their faces at the manifestation of the Sun of Righteousness as He shines forth in the splendor of God, with His bride beside Him and the majestic retinue of the holy angels. The stars also shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall shake with His stately steppings.

The regathering of Israel, His elect nation, will immediately follow His Advent. Having destroyed the hostile armies besieging the holy city, He will accomplish His gracious word toward His chosen people, for the time to favor Zion, yea the set time is come. (V. 31.)

The King's Exhortations

The chapter closes with the most solemn exhortations and admonitions concerning the coming of the great day. This generation—that is, the nation of Israel—shall not pass away until

all these things be fulfilled. The time is **uncertain**, but His coming is **certain**. His servants are to watch and be ready. Great danger threatens that servant who presumes on His Lord delaying His coming.

Now, if the Jewish disciples are thus warned to watch for the Advent which will be attended by such signs, how much more should we, Christians, be watching for His coming which will be unexpected, as a thief in the night! They are to be watching for the **Sun of Righteousness**, but we are looking with longing gaze for the beautiful **Morning Star**. May God grant unto us that we may be "looking for that **Blessed Hope!**"

"Even so, Lord Jesus, come!
Hope of all our hopes the sum!
Take Thy waiting people home!

"Long, so long, our blessed dead
Wait, from out the grave's dark bed
At Thine Advent to be led.

"Long, so long, the groaning Earth,
Cursed with war, and flood, and dearth,
Sighs for its redemption birth.

"Wherefore come, we daily pray;
Wipe creation's curse away;
Bring the Resurrection Day!"

THE KING AS JUDGE

Chapter 25

In the 25th chapter of **Matthew** we are still altogether on Jewish ground, and the scenes described are those which shall be enacted on the earth, not in heaven. And not at the end of time, nor at the End of the World, but at the **End of the Jewish Age**. This is "**The End**" so often spoken of in chapter 24. This present Church Age is not contemplated at all. The Dispensation in view is that in which the words were spoken, and which, though temporarily interrupted by the coming in of the parenthetical Church Age, is yet unfinished; and which cannot be completed until the Church is taken out of the way. "**Then** shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins." (V. 1.) This word "**then**" marks the exact time indicated by the parable uttered by our Lord. The word means, "**at that time**". (Compare ch. 24:45-51 and ch. 25:1, 14, R. V.)

The chapter is divided into three parts, containing the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the Parable of the Talents and the Judgment of the Gentile Nations, which shall be found upon the earth at the King's return from "a far country."

The Test of Discipleship

The coming of the Bridegroom here is not at

the Rapture of the Church. Such a thing is not to be sought for in **Matthew**. It is rather His return **with His bride** at the close of 'The Great Tribulation. (See ch. 24:29, 30.) It is "the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all them that believed in that day." (2 Thess. 1:7-10 R. V.)

In the ancient Syriac New Testament as well as the Latin Vulgate, the first verse of our chapter reads: "Then may the Kingdom of Heaven be shadowed forth by ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom **and Bride**." (See John 3:29.)

The virgins are professing Jewish disciples during the King's absence and just preceding His return. In Rev. 14:4, the same type is employed. (See also Ps. 45:14.) The Church as the bride of Christ is never seen in prophetic Scripture as a number of individuals, but always as **one body**. In 2 Cor. 11:2 she is "a chaste virgin," not a company of **virgins**. The bride will certainly appear with her Bridegroom when He is manifested, but she is not typified by the virgins in the Parable.

The **lamps** or torches are the Word of God in a type. (Ps. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19.)

The **going forth** of the virgins is their outward profession of loyalty to the coming King. They all "went forth."

The **oil** is a type of the Holy Spirit. (Zech. 4.) Five of the virgins had oil in their vessels with their torches. So every regenerate person has the Holy Spirit indwelling his body as well as the Word of God in his hands. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. (2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Cor. 6:19.) The **foolish virgins** took no oil. They were "**none of His**" (Ro. 8:9) for though they had a **form** of godliness they denied the **power** thereof. (2 Tim. 3:5.)

All boasting is excluded by the humiliating statement of the fifth verse—"While the Bridegroom tarried they **all** slumbered and slept," wise and foolish together, showing the failure of the flesh, and reminding us of our Lord's agonized question in the garden. (Matt. 26:40.)

The scene which follows the midnight cry is very pitiful. There is a great trimming of lamps, signifying, in the figure, a frantic searching of the Word of God at a time when it will be too late; a great longing for the oil of God, even a willingness to buy at any cost—but it is all in vain, for while they went, the Bridegroom came and the door was shut. There is much prayer—"Lord, Lord, open to us!" but He knows them not, for they are not among "them that are

His." (2 Tim. 2:19.) Surely there is need for the exhortation of verse 13, "**Watch therefore!**" (Compare Luke 12:35, 36.)

The Test of Service

The italics in verse 14 are misleading and should be omitted. The revision has greatly improved the rendering of the verse. Our Lord is simply using a second illustration to make His meaning perfectly clear. He still has in mind His coming as King and Judge of all the earth. We are still on Jewish ground. There is no grace—only law. (See vs. 19, 30.) Observe that "talents" is a commercial word, meaning a large sum of money. As a type it stands in this parable for **gifts for service**. (Compare 1 Peter 4:10, 11.) The reckoning time is at the King's return.

The Judgment of Living Nations

The Judgment of Living Nations follows. This is not a **General Judgment**, and indeed there is no such thing to be found in all Scripture. The idea of a General Judgment at the End of the World, when everyone who ever lived on the earth shall appear before the throne of God to have it decided where each shall spend eternity is without foundation in the Word of God.

The Judgment of Believers' Sins is already past. The Lord Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And He Himself said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My

word, and believeth Him that sent Me, **HATH** eternal life, and **COMETH NOT INTO JUDGMENT**, but **hath** passed out of death into life." (John 5:24 R. V.)

The Judgment of Believers' Works will take place "in the air," when Jesus comes for the Church. The matter of our **salvation** will never be brought into question, but it is written that every **work** must come into judgment. (See I Cor. 3:11-15.)

The Judgment of the Wicked Dead will be after the Millennium. It is fully described in the twentieth chapter of **The Revelation**.

The Judgment of Living Nations is the one set forth in Matt. 25. It will take place at the Glorious Appearing of Christ. The same judgment is described in the third chapter of **Joel**, where we learn that the Judgment will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat in the vicinity of Jerusalem, where the nations found upon the earth at Christ's Second Advent will be brought before Him to answer for their treatment of His brethren. These "**brethren**" are doubtless the **Jewish Remnant** who will have turned to the Lord during the terrible scenes of The Great Tribulation. They are the evangelizing messengers, testifying to the world of the coming of the Kingdom. (Ch. 24:14.) Those who believe the Gospel they preach will show it by their attitude towards the messengers. Those who reject it will also reject **them**. The result of this Judgment is seen in the 46th verse—"These shall go away into ever-

lasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Our Lord's coming for His Church must precede all this. How important it is that we should be always alert, watching for Him and prepared for His coming!

"Head of the Church, Thy body,
O Christ, the great Salvation!
Sweet to the saints
It is to think
Of all Thine Exaltation.
All power's to Thee committed—
All power, on Earth, in Heaven;
To Thee a Name
Of widest fame
Above all glory's given.

"With Thee, believers, raised,
In Thee on High are seated;
All guilty once,
But cleared by Thee:
Redemption toil's completed.
And when Thou, Lord and Saviour,
Shalt come again in glory,
There, by Thy side,
Thy spotless bride
Shall crown the wondrous story.

"At length—the final Kingdom!
No bound, no end possessing!
When Heaven and Earth,
God—all in all—
Shall fill with largest blessing.
All root of evil banished,
No breath of sin to wither;
On Earth—on High—
Naught else but joy,
And blissful peace for ever!"

THE KING'S GREAT LOVE

Chapter 26

The clock of prophecy moves very swiftly in the 26th chapter, and the picture presented is full of animation. In the foreground are seen men moved with blind passion and hatred towards God, rushing upon the thick bosses of His bucklers, seeking to extinguish the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And behind the scenes—God. Men may believe that because He is a God that hideth Himself, therefore He doth not know; the fool may even say in his heart that there is no God. But He **lives**, and **loves**, and **knows**, and **cares**. And the believer looks up into the thick darkness where God is and cries unto Him, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee! The remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain!" (Ps. 76: 10.) Poor, puny, feeble man may gloat over God's apparent defeat, and boast himself of his own little mightiness: but God is not dead, and God is not defeated. God is not deceived, and God is not mocked. He can afford to wait and He maketh the clouds His chariot.

The Son of God is about to die for His enemies. He was born of a woman "in the fullness of the time;" He will now, "in due time," die

for the ungodly. His hour has now come. Behold, how patiently he treads the path toward the Cross—for this cause came he forth. Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!

The Willing Sacrifice

Let it be always remembered that the Good Shepherd willingly yielded up His life for His sheep. He, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself. (Heb. 9:14.)

In Exodus 12:3-6 it was decreed that the Passover lamb must be slain on the fourteenth day of the month Abib. Jesus, the real Passover Lamb, in the 2d verse of our chapter, points out that He must be slain on that particular day. **"After two days"** He must be crucified. His enemies, in verse 5, said it must **not** be during the feast (R. V.) lest there be an uproar among the people; but He knew better than they, for He knew the Word of God and that the Scripture could not be broken. In verse 12 He recognizes the anointing as for His burial. In verses 24, 31 He shows that "it is written" is a sufficient reason for expecting it to come to pass. His spirit of willing sacrifice is shown throughout the story. "Let us be going" * * * "Thus it must be" * * * "That the Scriptures might be fulfilled" * * * "Jesus held His peace."

Man's **responsibility** in rejecting and slaying the Son of God is not lessened in any way by the revelation of the sovereignty of God. True, He

was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," but it was "by wicked hands" that He was taken, and crucified, and slain. (Acts 2:23.) When men killed the Prince of Glory, they did it ignorantly, but it was wilful ignorance—they would not have God's Man to reign over them. It is a fearful thing, to have the Word of God in one's hands, and to be wilfully ignorant of it. For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, **because they knew Him not**, nor yet the **voices of the Prophets**, which were read every Sabbath day, fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre (Acts 13:27-29.) Men are responsible, not only for what they know, but also for what they ought to know.

The Struggle in the Garden

The Lord Jesus in Gethsemane is seen in a fierce conflict with the enemy, who seeks to kill Him in the garden, and prevent His death on the Cross. Jesus' prayer for the cup to pass from Him was a petition to be delivered from death **in the garden**, and to be permitted to reach the Cross of Cavalry. If the Scriptures were to be fulfilled, He must die indeed, but it must be not in the garden, but on the Cross. His prayer was answered. He "was heard, in that He feared."

A comparison of certain passages in the **Psalms** and the **Epistle to the Hebrews** will make this matter clear. In Heb. 5:5-10 we read of Jesus, the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, "Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He were a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation; named of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."

In Heb. 1:8, 9, the Father is heard addressing the Son and saying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." This is taken from the 45th Psalm, and we thus learn for a certainty that this Psalm is Messianic. Reading further in Hebrews 1—verses 10-12—we hear the voice of the Father, still addressing the Son, and saying, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish: but Thou continuest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up as a garment, and

they shall be changed; but **Thou** art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

Now, turning to the 102d Psalm, whence these words are quoted, we may be surprised to learn the true meaning of the Psalm, as revealed by the Holy Spirit's use of it in Hebrews 1. We might suppose, for instance, that the words of the Psalm were words of David addressed to God the Father. But from the Spirit's own exposition of a portion of the Psalm, we find that we have here a conversation between the Father and the Son. And there can be little doubt, after careful study, that we have in this Psalm the conversation which passed between the Father and the Son during the struggle in Gethsemane. In verse 24, the Son, in His awful agony, sweating as it were great drops of blood, and feeling His very life going from Him, cries out, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." And then comes the answer from the Father: "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old didst Thou lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but **Thou** shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but **Thou** art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

Taking these scriptures together, and comparing them with Heb. 5, above quoted, it seems clear that the cup from which our Lord sought and obtained deliverance, was the death which

threatened Him in the garden. He had set His face as a flint towards the Cross, and when Satan met Him and sought to kill Him, and thus thwart the very purpose of God in sending His Son into the world, He cried out to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard, for His godly fear.

The Backsliding Disciple

Simon Peter's backsliding was a fair example of all backsliding. There were seven steps in it, for it was complete. His restoration, which is not described in *Matthew*, was also complete, consisting of seven steps upward, and it was as typical as his fall.

The Seven Steps Downward

First step—**Boastfulness.** (Matt. 26: 33-35.) Peter claimed to love Jesus more than all others. Whenever a Christian boasts of his own love for the Lord, or of his own attainments in spiritual things, comparing himself with others to their detriment, he is in a dangerous position; the backsliding has already begun.

Second step—**Unwatchfulness.** (Matt. 26: 40.) Boastfulness leads logically to this second step, for the need of watchfulness does not appear to the boastful man. He is one who "thinketh he standeth," and fails to "take heed lest he fall."

Third step—**Prayerlessness.** (Matt. 26: 41-45.) If there be no need to watch, neither is

there need to pray. Watching and praying go together.

Fourth step—**Fleshly service.** (Matt. 26: 51; John 18: 10.) When a Christian is backslidden, and thus out of fellowship with God, he is very apt to try to make up for this lack by fleshly activity—by “doing something for the Lord.” Of course, there can be no acceptable service which is not “in the Spirit,” and so long as there is interrupted fellowship there can be no service except “in the flesh.” No doubt, Peter drew his sword thinking he was doing God service. But it was not such service that God wanted of him, but rather the offering of a contrite heart. The prodigal son of Luke 15 made the same mistake, thinking to ask his father to make him one of the hired servants, when what the father wanted was not another servant, but his son, back in the home again, and sweet fellowship with him.

Fifth step—**Following afar off.** (Matt. 26: 58, cp. Eph. 2: 13.) We were afar off, but we have been made nigh. When we are in fellowship with Him, walking in the light as He is in the light, our consciences are purged, and we are enabled to draw nigh, even to come boldly. To follow afar off is to take a place of separation from Him, whereas His purpose for us is that we should occupy a place of separation from all things else, and unto Him.

Sixth step—**Fellowship with the Lord's enemies.** (Matt. 26: 69; Luke 22: 55.) Simon

Peter was uncomfortable, as every child of God in a backslidden condition is uncomfortable and unhappy, distressed and dissatisfied. And Peter made the usual mistake of seeking to obtain comfort among the enemies of his Lord. He sought to get warm by a fire they had kindled. Doubtless he heard there many things said against His Master, but his lips were sealed. The backslidden Christian is without a testimony for God, because he is not walking with God. And not only does he know it, but so also do his neighbors. His mouth is closed.

Seventh step—**Open denial.** (Matt. 26:70-75.) Three times, and with oaths and curses upon his lips, did this poor, unhappy child of God deny his Lord, even as He had forewarned him. Denial, in some measure, is the sure end of all backsliding. Indeed, it may almost be said that denial is the **beginning** of backsliding as well as its end, for as a matter of fact, backsliding, in its essence, is denial of our Lord. If Peter had not begun with denying the Lord's testimony of the danger in his pathway, he might have been saved the bitterness at the end of that pathway.

But, thanks be unto God, He is our Strong Deliverer. It was needful to let Peter have his own way until he should learn that his way was the wrong way. And yet, all the time, the Lord was at work restoring His sinning disciple, even before the outward signs of backsliding had begun. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate,"

and He knows the end from the beginning, and does not wait for our sins to appear: He began to pray for Peter before Peter had taken his first step downward, for He saw the danger ahead, which Peter refused to see. Notice the seven steps upward—the complete restoration:

The Seven Steps Upward

First step—**The Intercession of Christ.** (Luke 22:31, 32.) “I have prayed for thee.”

Second step—**The look of Christ.** (Luke 22:61.) Oh, the pity in that look! Oh, the love in it! And oh, the power of it! It did much to restore unhappy Peter. “He went out and wept bitterly.”

Third step—**The message from Christ.** (Mark 16:7.) “Tell His disciples—and Peter.” He knoweth His own sheep by name—the sick ones as well as the others—and He is of great compassion. He had died for Peter: should He now let him go? He had been delivered for Peter’s offenses—and doubtless they were many—and He had been raised for Peter’s justification: how could He let him go? He could not, and He did not. “And Peter!” What a gracious message for Simon’s ears! The joy of it—that message from Christ!

Fourth step—**The interview with Christ.** (Lu. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:3-5.) It has to come to this sooner or later in the case of every backslidden saint—and the sooner, the better. There

is nothing like a personal "talk with Jesus, to smooth the rugged road."

Fifth step—Open confession. (John 21:15-17.) This was threefold, and corresponds to the threefold open denial. Peter had begun with a boast that he loved Jesus more than all the disciples besides him. And now the question must be answered—"Lovest thou Me more than these?" All boasting is excluded from Peter's answers, and fellowship is restored.

Sixth step—Peter restored to his work. (John 21:15-17.) "Feed My lambs . . . Tend My sheep . . . Feed My sheep."

Seventh step—Back to the starting point. (John 21:18, 19.) "Follow Me." Thus does He perfectly restore. "What a wonderful Saviour!"

The Coming Glory

In verses 27 to 29 the Lord Jesus was made the butt of ridicule, and insults were heaped upon Him, in connection with His rightful title, "The King of the Jews." In verse 37 the inscription provided by Pilate is given—"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." In verse 64 the enemies of Jesus sought to prevent the dawning of the coming glory which would demonstrate His right to the title of royalty.

But all their efforts failed. God hath highly exalted Him and He will yet be manifested as King of the Jews not only, but as the King over all the earth, the King of Kings and Lord of

Lords. His sufferings are past and His glory will surely be revealed. Of this we are reminded every time we sit together at His memorial table —“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till He come.”

“Draw nigh, draw nigh, Immanuel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

And ransom captive Israel
“Draw nigh, O Jesse’s Rod, draw nigh,
To free us from the enemy;
From Hell’s abyss Thy people save,
And given us vict’ry o’er the grave.

“Draw nigh, draw nigh, O Morning Star,
And bring us comfort from afar!
And banish far from us the gloom
Of sinful night and endless doom.

“Draw nigh, draw nigh, O Lord of Might,
The Heav’nly gate unfolds to Thee.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

“Draw nigh, draw nigh, O Lord of Might,
Who to Thy tribes from Sinai’s height,
In ancient time didst give the Law,
In cloud of majesty and awe.

“Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!”

THE KING'S GREAT SACRIFICE

Chapter 27

On a tombstone in an English graveyard there is this inscription, bearing the date, 1657:

"I dare not work, my soul to save:
That work the Lord hath done.
But I will work like any slave
For love of God's dear Son."

This ought to be the thought of every man who studies the 27th chapter of **Matthew**, where God's dear Son is seen lifted up on the Cross, and drawing all men unto Himself.

The person of Jesus is the theme of all Scripture. He is "the Truth," the center and circumference of the whole circle of revelation. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

But, strictly speaking, as Dr. Pierson has said, the scheme of revelation in the Word of God is **elliptical** rather than **circular**. There are, when thus viewed, two centers, around which all revolves. The first is "the **sufferings** of Christ"—the Cross of Calvary. The second is "the **glory** that shall follow"—His Second Advent. (See 1 Peter 1:10, 11.)

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His two Advents, is the great Heart of the Scriptures, and their

chief end is to make Him known. The **incarnate Word** is unfolded in the **written Word**.

The poverty of riches is a real embarrassment in any attempt to expound this chapter. Everything converges here. The Cross is the anti-type of many Old Testament types and symbols: for example, the brazen altar, the pole upholding the brazen serpent, the door-post and lintel of the Passover, etc., etc. Our Lord is the Burnt-Offering, the Peace-Offering, the Meal-Offering, the Sin-Offering, the Trespass-Offering. There are three elements in every offering: the Priest, the offerer and the sacrifice itself. Jesus was all these, as here **He**, through the Eternal Spirit, **offered Himself**, without spot, to God.

The Scriptures Fulfilled

This chapter contains seven quotations from the Old Testament. The **first** is in verses 9, 10, where the words quoted are attributed to Jeremiah. These words are not found in the Book of **Jeremiah** in its present form, but similar language is in **Zechariah**, chapter 11, verses 12, 13. The ancient Syriac and Persian versions of **Matthew** omit the name of Jeremiah, as well as some of the Greek manuscripts. It is supposed, however, by some scholars that chapters 9, 10 and 11 of **Zechariah** were written by Jeremiah, and from Jerome we learn that there was still extant in his time an apocryphal book of the prophet Jeremiah, in which was found every letter of the words quoted by Matthew. The

Second Book of the Maccabees also contain many words of Jeremiah. (But see Jer. 18: 1-4; 19: 1-3.)

The **second** quotation in our chapter is in verse 34. (Compare Psalm 69: 21.) The **third** in verse 35 (Psalm 22: 18); the **fourth** in verse 39 (Ps. 22: 7; 109: 25); the **fifth** in verse 43 (Ps. 22: 8); the **sixth** in verse 46 (Ps. 22: 1); the **seventh** in verse 48 (Ps. 69: 21).

Yet other Scriptures were also fulfilled, though not specially cited here. (See verses 2, 12-14, 26-31, 35, and compare with Isaiah, 53d chapter.)

The Seven Words From the Cross

These seven sayings of our suffering Saviour are gathered from the four Gospel records.

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34.)

2. "Woman, behold thy son...Behold thy mother." (John 19: 26, 27.)

3. "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 43.)

4. "Eli! Eli! Lama Sabachthani." (Matt. 27: 46; Mark 15: 34.)

5. "I thirst!" (John 19: 28.) This "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (Ps. 69: 21.)

6. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." (Luke 23: 46.)

7. "It is finished!" (John 19: 30.)

Each of these sayings is perfectly in keeping with the particular Gospel containing it. **Mat-**

thew writes of Jesus as the **Son of Abraham**; Mark as the **Servant of God**; Luke as the **Son of Man**, and John as the **Son of God**. As Andrew Jukes has so beautifully put it, "**Abraham's Son** may cry 'My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?' The **Servant of God** may also cry with a loud voice and give up the ghost. The **Son of Man** may say, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' But of the **Son of the Father** we read, 'After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, saith, "I thirst!" Then, when He had received the vinegar, He said, "It is finished!" and bowed His head, and 'yielded up the spirit.' As the **Eternal Son**, He need not 'commend Himself' to God. His own 'It is finished,' seals with a sufficient witness the full accomplishment of His own perfect work."

"When He from His lofty throne
Stooped down to do and die,
Everything was fully done.
Hearken to His cry,
'It is finished!' Yes, indeed,
Finished every jot!
Sinner, this is all you need!
Tell me, is it not?"

From a comparison of Psalm 40: 6-8 with Hebrews 10: 5-9, we learn that the Lord Jesus' word to the Father as He departed from heaven to lay down His life in the earth was, "Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God!"

His first recorded utterance on earth was "I must be about My Father's business."

And His last words before yielding up the ghost upon the Cross were, "**It is finished!**"

It was His Father's will that He through death should deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He died for us! Saving others, He could not save Himself. In this sense His enemies' words in verse 42 are true.

"I believe! I-believe! And I know it is done!
That my sins are all pardoned—yes, every one!
That the finished salvation by Christ on the tree
Has wrought out deliverance, even for me!"

All this is emphasized by the signs attending the crucifixion of our Lord—the darkness, the rent veil and the opened graves "after His resurrection."

Josephus says the veil in the Temple was thirty feet high and that two teams of oxen whipped in opposite directions could not have torn it. And yet it was rent in twain, from top to bottom. (See Heb. 10:19-22; compare 9:8.) It was a type of His flesh. Under the Law it was death for a sinner to enter the Holy of Holies through the veil. Under grace it is death to remain without. "Let us draw near!"

"**'It is finished!'** So that never
Can it more than finished be.
Finished once and **finished** ever:
Nothing can undo the plea.
'Finished!' Always, all, complete!
'Finished!' Is there word more sweet?"

“‘It is finished!’ Uncompleted,
Everything I try to do;
‘It is finished!’ Unrepeated:
Nothing left to add thereto.
‘It is finished!’ God has told it!
‘It is finished!’ Man, behold it!
‘Finished!’ Pleasing to God’s mind,
‘Finished!’ Here I resting find.

“‘It is finished’ and completed!
Not the work within my soul;
Not the teaching, oft-repeated;
But the touch that makes me whole.
‘It is finished!’ God has said it!
‘It is finished!’ Faith has read it!
‘Finished’ and completed, all
That redeems from Adam’s fall!

“‘It is finished’ and completed!
All God’s purposes of grace;
Therefore is the Worker seated
In the heavenly resting-place.
‘It is finished!’ Christ hath done it!
‘It is finished!’ Christ hath won it!
‘Finished!’ Failing heart, be glad!
‘Finished!’ I can nothing add.”

THE KING'S TRIUMPH

Chapter 28

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the great fundamental doctrine of Christianity, and the pledge and guaranty of our own resurrection. It has been called "the best authenticated great event of history." And it is well that it is so, for everything depends upon it, and without it we should be even as others who have no hope.

The Resurrection of our Lord was demanded by many Old Testament types and symbols, such as Aaron's rod that budded, the wave-sheaf of the firstfruits, and many others. It was also demanded by explicit Old Testament prophecies and promises. (Compare Ps. 16: 8-10 with Acts 2: 22-36.) And it was demanded also by our Lord's own oft-repeated predictions. Over and over again He told His little band of followers that He was going to Jerusalem to be crucified and that He would rise again after three days.

But they did not believe it. When the crucifixion had really taken place, they were so overwhelmed with grief and dismay that they apparently forgot all about His promise to rise from the dead; and when He did break the bands of death, there was no one who believed it. **Luke** tells us (ch. 24: 1-11) that when the women ran

to bring the disciples word, "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

All this is omitted from **Matthew's** account, for it is not fitting that the King's word should be doubted. And yet there seems to be a suggestion of rebuke in the words of the angel who had rolled away the stone, revealing the empty tomb, and who said unto the women: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, Who hath been crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, **even as He said.** Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you."

"Even as He said." May the Lord help us to enter into the meaning of that word! Oh, how much He has said to us! And how little of it we really believe in such a way as to make it practical in our daily life and testimony! Theoretically, perhaps, we believe Him; but we need to learn, practically, that His simple word is the surest thing in the universe. And, sooner or later, we shall find that everything will come to pass, "even as He said."

There is great need of teaching and preaching the Resurrection of Jesus. This was the keynote of the preaching of the Apostles and early disciples, and the blessing of God followed their testimony unto "Jesus and the Resurrection."

We are not called upon to **prove** the Resurrection by human argument or logical processes. We

are to **preach** it; it will **prove** itself—or, rather, the Holy Spirit of Truth will prove it, for He is here for the express purpose of glorifying the Lord Jesus in the minds of men, and to convict the world of sin, because they believe not on Him. (John 16:7-11.)

The best proof of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a **real Christian**. It has been well said that "just as the literal Resurrection of the body of Jesus was an evidence of the divine power of God, so the living energy of the members of His mystical body is a testimony to the world of His risen life." We are witnesses of these things.

"Have you read the Gospel?" was asked of an eminent Chinese scholar.

"No," he replied. "I have not **read** it, but I have **seen** it."

The Resurrection Discovered

Let it be remembered that no human eye saw the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That was for God alone. It was enough for man that he should see the empty grave—"the place where the Lord lay." Precisely when the Resurrection took place, is not revealed; we only know that it was sometime between sunset on Saturday evening and sunrise on Sunday morning. It is certain that He was in the heart of the earth for **three days and three nights**, for He Himself said it should be so. (Matt. 12:40.) And though men say He was crucified on "Good Fri-

day" and rose on "Easter Sunday," we shall all finally discover that He knew the end from the beginning, and that it all came out "even as He said."

The End of the Sabbath

The Resurrection of Jesus was "in the end of the Sabbath," in a double sense, for the Sabbath was abolished by it, and there has never been a Sabbath since He came forth from the tomb. Strictly speaking, there is no Sabbath now, and to refer to **the Lord's day**, or any other day, as "**the Christian Sabbath**," is unscriptural, and results from a failure to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." We are not under the **Law**, but under **grace**. (Ro. 6: 14.) "**The ministration of death**, written and engraven in stones," has given place to "**the ministration of the spirit**." Instead of "**the ministration of condemnation**," we have to do with "**the ministration of righteousness**." And "if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." (2 Cor. 3.)

Meeting With the Risen Lord

When, with mingled feelings "of fear and great joy," the women had started to tell the disciples about the empty grave, "behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail!'" And when they took hold of His feet and worshipped Him, still torn doubtless by doubt as to the evidence of their own senses, He said unto them, "Fear not:

go tell My brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see Me."

How very simple, and how very beautiful! And He is not ashamed to call us "brethren," though our poor hearts doubt Him, even after all these years of "many infallible proofs."

The Enemy's Lie

The device of the Chief Priests and Elders was a very clumsy one. It seems hardly worthy of Satan, who is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. How could the guards be expected to know what had transpired while they slept?

The Great Commission

There is no account of the Ascension in **Matthew**, for it is apart from his purpose as setting forth the Kingship of Jesus. His departure into a far country did not necessitate His abdication, nor the appointment of a regency, for, though invisible to His people, He yet declared that He should be with them always. He is Immanuel, "God with us." Let us remember His own promise: "Lo, I am **with** you all the days, even to the Consummation of the Age."

The disciples' work, as outlined in "The Great Commission," was threefold:

First—**Make disciples** of all the nations.

Second—**Baptizing** them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Third—**Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever the Lord Jesus had commanded them.

"In the Name of the Lord Jesus"

It seems, at first sight, a surprising thing to find that, beginning with Pentecost, which was but a few days after "The Great Commission" was given, and down to the end of the New Testament history of the Church, all the baptisms recorded were simply **"into the Name of the Lord Jesus,"** instead of "into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (See Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5.) In seeking an explanation, it is well to remember that the Trinitarian formula is found only in **Matthew**, the Kingdom Gospel. The full accomplishment of "The Great Commission," therefore, may be looked for in the future, in connection with the manifestation of the Kingdom, rather than during the present Dispensation in connection with the Church of God.

The purpose of God in this present time, by means of the ministry of the Church, is not to "disciple the nations," but rather to **"take out of them a people for His Name."** And according to His revealed program, it is only **"after this"** is accomplished that He **"will return,"** and the **"residue of men shall seek after the Lord, and all the nations,"** upon whom His Name is called. (Acts 15:14-17.)

In the meantime, the Church of God, which

Matthew's Gospel of the Kingdom does not contemplate here, is to witness for Christ "unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) And wherever and whenever men shall turn unto the Lord, they are to be baptized "into the Name of the Lord Jesus," in Whom dwelleth **all the fullness of the Godhead** bodily. This is the key to this present Dispensation of the Mystery, "that in all things **He** might have the pre-eminence."

The Church of God is the body of Christ, the fullness of Him. (Eph. 1:23.) Every Christian—that is, everyone born again by the power of the Holy Spirit—every Christian is a member of His body. This vital union with the risen and glorified Lord is accomplished by what the New Testament calls the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, this wonderful transaction is set forth.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members, of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit."

This is the baptism referred to in Galatians 3:27, 28:

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one in **Christ Jesus.**"

Now the reason for water baptism is to show forth, as in a type, this Spirit baptism. It is the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." There can be no other Scriptural warrant for it. There is no saving efficacy in water baptism. But it is important, nevertheless, for we are bidden to be baptized, and He has His own purpose in thus commanding us. As Romans 6: 3, 4, has it:

"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried **therefore** with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

The members of the body of Christ may freely admit that in them, that is in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Ro. 7: 18), but they rejoice that "in Him dwelleth **all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**," and their completeness is in Him, "Who is the Head of all Principality and Power: in Whom they were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, . . . having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein they were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2: 8-12.)

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the Head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have

the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." (Col. 1:17-20.)

"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.)

It is fitting that those who have been baptized **"into Jesus Christ,"** by the Spirit of God, should be baptized in water, according to His command, **"into the Name of the Lord Jesus."** Having **"put on Christ,"** it is also their privilege to put on His Name. And this is exactly what occurred in the household of Cornelius, as described in the tenth chapter of Acts:

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, **who have received the Holy Spirit** as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized **in the name of Jesus Christ.**" (Vs. 44-48.)

On the great Day of Pentecost, in his address to the Jews (Acts 2), this same Peter had said unto them:

"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ** unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added

in that day about three thousand souls." (Vs. 38-41.)

Again, in the 8th chapter of **Acts** it is written:

"Now when the Apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized **into the name of the Lord Jesus**. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Vs. 14-17.)

Peter's presence was needed, for reasons explained in connection with the 16th chapter. The water baptism, "**into the name of the Lord Jesus**," was according to the mind of God, and when the other conditions were met, the gift of the Holy Spirit was the answer of God.

In the 19th chapter of **Acts** there is another case bearing upon our question:

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe

on Him that should come after him, that is, on **Jesus**. And when they heard this, they were baptized **into the name of the Lord Jesus**. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them." (Vs. 1-6.)

A careful examination of the entire record seems to leave little room for doubt that the original Apostolic method was to administer baptism "**into the name of the Lord Jesus**." This seems to be implied also in Paul's rebuke of sectarianism in the Corinthian Church:

"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or **were ye baptized into the name of Paul?**" (1 Cor. 1:13.)

And this is entirely in keeping with the general principle for the guidance of the Church, laid down in Col. 3:17:

"And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do **all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father **through Him**."

It is declared in Philippians 2:9-11 that God has decreed that His Son, Who at His First Advent "**made himself of no reputation**," shall one day be the acknowledged Lord of the Universe:

"God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that **in the name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The name of the Lord is indeed a strong

tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. And in the glad time that is coming, when there shall be no more curse, His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (Prov. 18: 10; Rev. 22: 3, 4.)

"Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Sing aloud the Name;
Till it softly, slowly,
Sets all hearts aflame.

"Jesus! Name of cleansing,
Washing all our stains;
Jesus! Name of healing,
Balm for all our pains.

"Jesus! Name of boldness,—
Making cowards brave;
Name that in the battle,
Certainly must save.

"Jesus! Name of vict'ry,
Stretching far away,
Right across Earth's war-fields,
To the plains of day.

"Jesus! Name of beauty,
Beauty far too bright
For our Earth-born fancy,
For our mortal sight.

"Jesus! be our joy-note
In this vale of tears;
Till we reach the Home-land,
And th' eternal years."

“Even to the End of the Age”

When shall it be—“the End of the Age?”
When shall the King return, to “take His great
power and reign?” Who can tell? No one can
tell the time, for it is one of the secret things
which belong to God. And yet—

“I do not think it can be long
Till in His glory He appear:
And yet I dare not name the day,
Nor fix the solemn Advent year.
I only know that He is near,
And that His voice I soon shall hear.”

Recent dispatches from the east bring the news that the Turkish government is seeking to induce the Jews to settle in the land of Palestine. And this happens just as the persecutions in Russia are becoming intolerable and the people of Israel are looking in every direction for an asylum. With the doors opened into the Holy Land, there has begun a stream of immigration into that land which promises to bring millions of the Covenant People back to their home to make ready for the final scenes at the End of the Age.

The fig tree is putting forth its leaves: the summer is nigh! Our ears are strained for the shout of the Lord Himself, with the trump of God and the voice of the Archangel; for the End-time cannot come until the Church is removed from the earth.

And what a joy it will be when He shall re-

turn, at the End of the Age, with His saints, to set up the throne of David and usher in the Kingdom of Righteousness! What a glad day when, the judgment past, and Satan restrained for the Thousand Years, our Lord shall reign as the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! May He hasten it in His time!

"They come and go, the seasons fair,
And bring their spoil to vale and hills;
But there is waiting in the air,
And a glad Hope the spirit fills:
Why doth He tarry, the absent Lord?
When shall the Kingdom be restored?
And Earth and Heaven, with one accord,
Ring out the cry that the King comes!

"The floods have lifted up their voice:
The King hath come unto His own!
The little vales and hills rejoice,
His right it is to take the crown.
Sleepers, awake, and meet Him first!
Now let the marriage-hymn outburst!
And powers of darkness flee dispersed.
What will it be when the King comes?

"A ransomed Earth breaks forth in song,
Her sin-stained ages overpast:
Her yearning, 'Lord, how long—how long?'
Exchanged for joy at last—at last.
Angels will carry His commands;
Peace beameth forth in all the lands;
Trees of the field shall clap their hands—
What will it be when the King comes?

"Now Zion's hill, with glory crowned,
Uplifts her head with joy once more:
And Zion's King, once scorned, disowned,
Extends her rule from shore to shore.
Sing! for the Land her Lord regains!
Sing! for the Son of David reigns!
And living streams o'erflow her plains—
What will it be when the King comes?

"O brothers, stand as men that wait;
The dawn is purpling in the East;
And banners wave from Heaven's high gate:
The conflict now, but soon the feast!
Mercy and Truth shall meet again:
Worthy the Lamb that once was slain!
We suffer now—He'll know us then—
What will it be when the King comes?"

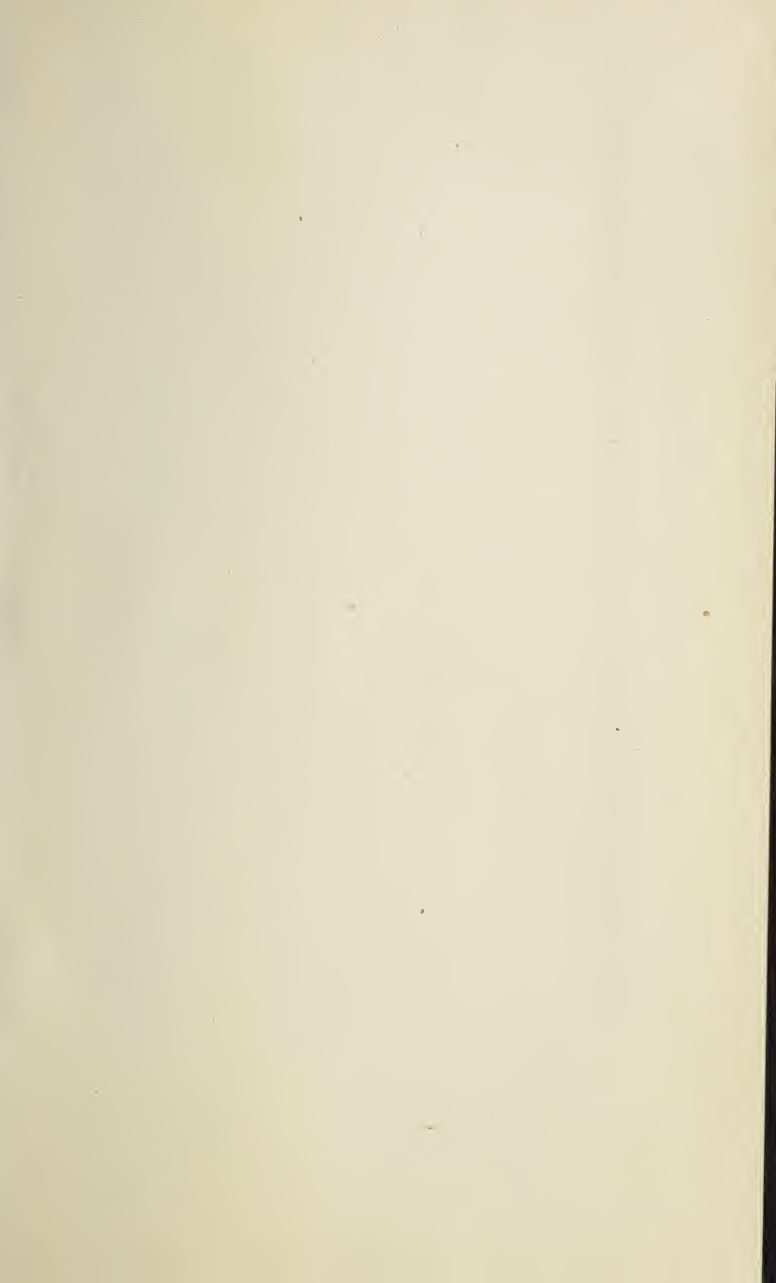
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Matthew*



By
William L. Pettingill



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